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Michael Lind

The New Sound of Music
Michael Medved

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Nathan Glazer

Bringing Back the Settlement House — *Howard Husock*

Is the Rehnquist Court Conservative? — *David P. Bryden*

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"Subverting the context": Public space and public design

NATHAN GLAZER

THE AGE when we built great city parks, or parkways, or boulevards is over and has been for forty years or more. Anyone raised in New York City or Boston knows how much these cities were embellished by the park and parkway designers and builders, and pre-eminently Frederick Law Olmsted. Our efforts are devoted these days to retaining as much as we can of their achievements, rather than adding to them. But occasionally a new opportunity to add to our parks arises. The last major piece of "undeveloped" land on the island of Manhattan, the former railroad yards on the Hudson River between 59th and 72nd Streets, will, on the basis of plans worked out between developer Donald Trump and community groups, provide opportunity for a park on the Hudson River. What will it be? What can it be? This was the challenge placed before student landscape architects in five major schools, and the subject of an exhibit of their answers in New York City last March.

This article originated as the Benjamin C. Howland Memorial Lecture at the University of Virginia School of Architecture.

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New York City and parks: The two would appear to be in as mortal competition as any two concepts one can try to juggle together. New York City is as remote from nature and the natural as any great city in the world. Its famous gridiron pattern was laid down relentlessly on what was once a rich natural environment, covering streams, leveling hills, filling valleys, straightening out a varied shoreline to serve shipping and industry and roadways. Some bits of open space were left in the gridiron plan for Manhattan, owing mostly to the odd, diagonal course of Broadway. Its path could not easily be changed, and where it crossed the major north-south avenues, "parks" or "squares" were created.

A great act of imagination and foresight reserved the central part of the island for Central Park; another great act of foresight created Prospect Park in Brooklyn. We in this country did not have a heritage of palace gardens and hunting parks of kings and great nobles to turn into green spaces for our cities. New York has no great tree-lined boulevards, with green strips, to open up the city, as we find in continental cities, or old fortifications to turn into city sport-grounds and parks. Its few efforts in this direction, puny by continental standards—Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, the Grand Concourse in the Bronx—have fallen on hard times, as their bordering apartment houses, no matter how grand, are with difficulty prevented from becoming slums, or rehabilitated once they have become slums. Its truly large parks are some leftover spaces at the city's edges. We are grateful to them, but Van Cortlandt and Pelham Bay Park are scarcely the Bois de Boulogne, from the point of view of public investment, or symbolic meaning in the eyes of the city-dwellers.

What can landscape architecture, the art of the design of the fragments of open space available, of the shaping of plants and grass and bushes and trees and water, mean for this most relentlessly hard of cities, paved over to the point where hardly a bit of earth shows, where street trees, with whatever hope they are planted, often do not survive, in which the bushes even of Central Park—as a story some years ago told us—have to have their roots chained to some underground anchor to prevent vandals from pulling them up, in which green displays to brighten entries to public, apartment, and office buildings will have to be dispensed with in the fear they cannot survive the assaults of a

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polluted environment and an uncaring, larcenous, or positively malicious citizenry? As Khrushchev said of Manhattan, "There is no greenery; it is enough to make a stone sad."

I. Olmsted's vision

I was born, and spent the first ten years of my life, on a tenement block in East Harlem, between Second and Third Avenues. Elevated trains then ran along both avenues, erected on steel structures. They made for intriguing photographs, but a bad place to live. They were torn down in the 1930s and 1940s, and the story was that the iron supports went to Japan to be shot back at us in World War II. There were no street trees, no green strips. That was the world I knew. But two-and-a-half long avenue blocks to the west was Central Park. It is a part of the park, the far north, where one does not find meadows and playing fields, statues and formal elements, such as the Mall and the Bethesda Fountain and the Conservatory lake, which are all far to the south.

It is the park as Olmsted and his colleague Calvert Vaux must have envisaged it—the green relief from a crowded city, an evocation of unspoiled nature, with its trees and springs and boulders and wandering lanes. It was, in a word, for someone growing up in East Harlem, wonderful, and I put the accent on "wonder." Of course Olmsted's nature was not nature in the raw, wilderness nature. Nor was it the site of Central Park as Olmsted found it. The boulders were moved to make appropriate romantic patterns evoking perhaps, in a modest way, the Catskills; the streams were shaped; the lakes were dug; the plants and trees were brought in and I assume some were not native. The typical Olmstedian vision, the English park, with an expanse of green meadow bordered by great trees, is not easily maintained in our northeastern climate, as we are told by Anne Whiston Spirn in her fascinating book, *The Granite Garden*. The rain and moisture are too irregular, the summer is too hot, and left to itself any meadow rapidly reverts to scrub on its way to becoming forest, and the intermediate condition is not pretty.

Nevertheless, Central Park was a wonder. When one penetrated it, the skyline of the city disappeared. As a boy, frightened of getting lost in the park, I was told by my older brother that I should, when lost, climb to the highest rock, and look for

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the great red lantern on the tall Fifth Avenue Hospital—that marked East, and I could orient myself by it to find my way out of the park. Olmsted's scheme was to ring the park with trees, so that the straight, man-made line of buildings that would in time encircle the park would be blotted out, and the park user could imagine himself in distant meadow and woodland. It worked for me, and gave me an experience that the brick and concrete and iron city could not.

It is therefore understandable that whatever criticism the Olmstedian vision has attracted in recent years would not find favor in my eyes. And it has attracted much criticism, directly and by implication. One sees it criticized or ignored in the kinds of plans and constructions many landscape architects now favor, and in the way open space is managed in many new urban developments. Just such a criticism was made when the *New York Times*'s architecture critic, Herbert Muschamp, reviewed the proposals of the student landscape architects for the new park in Manhattan. "A Park is Not Just Another Pretty Space," ran the title of his article. That was clearly designed to pique the interest of those, like myself, who thought that to be pretty was one of the more desirable and important attributes of urban parks. The new park will be the most important addition to usable open space in Manhattan in many years, if the project ever comes off. It will be south of Riverside Park, which runs north from 72nd Street on the Hudson River almost to the end of Manhattan Island. The site is now an expanse of abandoned railway yards, piers, and a highway that must be rebuilt. Donald Trump planned to erect there, in headier days, the tallest building in the world, among other things. Community opposition, presumably aided by the collapse of the New York real-estate market, led to a new plan that has been widely welcomed and admired.

The plan consists, gratifyingly, of the extension of an old plan. It extends south the Riverside Drive we know. There will be an unbroken serpentine row of apartment buildings (and some office buildings) bordering the Drive on the land side, of a scale and design similar to the apartment buildings of the early 1900s that now border the old Riverside Drive to the north. This is only common sense, which we have with pain rediscovered in recent years. We have had enough of urban superblocks obliter-

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ating the Manhattan street grid, thank you. So it is considered a breakthrough when a hundred-year-old design for Riverside Drive and Park is simply continued southward into the new area made available by the decline of rail-freight traffic.

New park proposals

Landscape architecture students at five schools took on, as a project, designing the new park that will take up the southern portion of the site. Herbert Muschamp chose one of their proposals to illustrate his review of their work. We see in the illustration a field of upright steel beams, set on grass. In the background is a rusting metal structure. This certainly illustrates the thesis of his title, that is, that "a park is not just another pretty space." This brutal image is chosen by Muschamp to reflect desirable new directions for the design of open space for a city like New York. As he writes, this display of student work "shows great promise. The students have risen to the level of the project's ambitious intentions. Overall, these designs are refreshingly free from formula: no modernoid lunar landscapes with lollipop lightbulbs, no 'Olmstoid' caricatures of Frederick Law Olmsted's pioneering work of a century ago."

In view of what I have said about my experience of Central Park, it is understandable I did not take lightly this dismissal of Olmsted as a proper inspiration and influence for someone designing a park in New York today. I carry no brief for the other alternative, "modernoid lunar landscapes." But what did Muschamp mean by "Olmstoid"? And what sort of work did he prefer? The illustration he chose for his review, the gaunt upright steel beams and rusting iron, was not promising, and I decided to find out just what was happening among young practitioners of landscape architecture when they considered what was appropriate for that strange city, New York, and see the exhibit for myself.

It was indeed fascinating. I was reassured to learn that the Olmstedian vision is not dead. One student, from City College, writes in the description of her design: "This is a romantic design for Riverside South that harkens back to a green, Olmstedian vision of a park as a place to commune with nature, to enjoy spectacular views and sunsets, to enjoy trees, green vistas, and quiet gardens. It is also a place, like Central Park's Bethesda Fountain, to enjoy the public theater of New York." I have no

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argument with that (though perhaps this student was trying to crowd too much on a twenty-one acre plot). A few other designs are similar. But such proposals will not get any attention from Herbert Muschamp, or any other contemporary critic.

Some of the students favor—as his illustration exemplifies—a kind of industrial brutalism that reminds one of the history of the site, and that links one to the harsh city to the west. He particularly applauds those schemes that "propose to restore ecological balance by returning at least part of the site to its former condition as a salt marsh." He favors most those that try to enlist advanced technology in the restoration or maintenance of ecological balance. Thus, one scheme proposes a grove of forty windmills that would generate power to light the park at night. Another scheme combines the restoration of the salt marsh with eight windmills for energy. Some schemes recall the desolate industrial landscape that now remains from the past, retaining some of its skeletal remains, or evoking it with chain-link fences. Some are alternatively highly formal. To quote one description: "An exploration of the temporal and cyclical forces of seasonal change ... a central spiral amphitheater which generates many smaller spiralling forms." A few introduce social elements, though in different ways: One proposes a series of terraces made up of 322 ten-by-forty-foot garden plots allotted for a one-year period to individual citizens. By my count, perhaps three of twenty designs are in the Olmstedian tradition: As for the others, we find the ecological theme prominent (restoring the salt marsh), often combined with the technological. We find highly contemporary formalistic schemes. We find schemes emphasizing urban theater, and schemes giving the stark remains of the industrial past a large place.

The landscape architect as social critic

I imagine the citizens of New York, even on the sophisticated West Side, would vote for Olmsted if given a chance. The students on the whole do not, and as a teacher I can understand that: They should explore, experiment, try even outlandish schemes. One student quotes from the fashionable French philosophers Gilles DeLeuze and Felix Guattari, choosing one of those hermetic passages in which current French philosophers delight to introduce his highly constructivist scheme of plat-

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forms, walkways, and ramps. In this respect students of landscape architecture are no different from students of literary criticism, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and other fields, many of whom are now attracted by obscure and obscurantist theory. The passage that the student places at the beginning of his scheme, and that we are to assume inspired or guided him, reads: "In short this limit is neither at the side of nor beyond: it is a boundary between the two."

The citizens, I would guess, would vote for Olmsted; the students would not. One can understand this as a search for the new, the different, the contemporary, something more suitable to our modern condition, and more suitable to the reality of New York City. But what do they find that is more suitable? Behind the surface characteristics of the non-Olmstedian schemes—ecological, industrial-archaeological, urban-theatrical, formalistic—one detects two basic theoretical underpinnings. One is to extend some aspect of the existing city, and by extending it assert that the pastoral, the shaped countryside, can no longer be part of the meaningful experience of urban man. The jagged or angular or spiral forms, the ramps and walkways, all represent the artificiality of urban life, its nervousness, its disorder, its remoteness from the organic, the tranquil, the quiet, and the peaceful. It would seem to these students something of a lie, I think, to design restorative spaces for the crowded, noisy, assaultive city. Something that extends the city, reminds one of the city, and is in some ways equally assaultive seems necessary. But, on the other hand, in extending the city in these various ways—with decaying industrial detritus, with angular forms, straight edges, a very sparse use of nature (except for the attempt to restore the original salt marsh, which is quite common)—they also want to simultaneously criticize and attack the existing city.

It is interesting to me that we can thus think of two ways of "contradicting" the city. One was Olmsted's way, which tries to remove its noise and crowding and sharp building forms, hides them behind a screen of trees, and presents to the eyes a tranquil meadow or lake, or streams and rocks recalling a wilder nature. The second is to take those elements of the city that we might all consider unpleasant and to abstract from them something which in some respect exaggerates them: the city's disorder, or the temporality of its forms, or its hardness, or its sharp and inorganic edges.

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In other words, it is landscape architecture as social criticism. One can argue that Olmsted's landscape architecture is also social criticism, and make the superficially powerful point that Olmsted's social criticism is simply the past criticizing the present, the genteel criticizing the vulgar; and on the contrary, that the kind of social criticism we see in these student projects is the future criticizing the present, a future that may be a return to a primal nature, or a technology we cannot yet realize, or the harsh remains of the industrial technology of today, or a utopia we cannot quite imagine. This is a rather grimmer social criticism altogether. And if we find the present-day city inadequate, if we find that it does not take into account sufficiently the ordinary and the human, that it is a city in which it is hard to raise and educate children, find an apartment, move around, deal with the bureaucracy, and protect one's life and property, then why not this harder criticism?

II. Serra's vision

Perhaps the most striking case of this kind of criticism realized in an open space in New York City was Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*. The story in its outlines is well known. An open space existed in lower Manhattan. On two sides it was bordered by Federal buildings, a modern Federal courthouse and office building. The office building is an anonymous and really ugly very large structure of the 1960s. The open space was already shaped. It has a fountain (which, as is true of almost all New York City fountains, rarely spouted water—either there was a water shortage or it needed repair, or something), and it had a decorative pavement, spiralling out from the round fountain to fill the space. Indeed, the pavement might remind one of the elegant paving of Michelangelo's *Campidoglio* in Rome. Serra was already famous when he was commissioned to do the piece of sculpture that would decorate the plaza, though the term "decorative" would not have been approved by him, or the term "embellishment," or any other term that might evoke the beautiful, the pretty, the pleasant.

Serra is a minimalist sculptor, interested in working in the city. He had already placed major works in Lower Manhattan—in one case, a tower of three huge plates of Cor-Ten steel, thirty-six feet long by twelve feet wide; in another, a huge arc of

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Cor-Ten steel, 200 feet long, twelve feet high, placed in a circular space at the exit of the Holland Tunnel. He had been approached for major commissions at the Federal Triangle in Washington, for which the architect was Robert Venturi, and for a space in front of the Pompidou Center in Paris, but neither had been realized owing to conflicts with the architects.

In a group of interviews published in 1980, when the design for *Tilted Arc* was complete but before it was erected, we learn something of Serra's intentions when it comes to working in urban and public space. His first public work in New York was a steel circle sunk into an anonymous street in the Bronx. As we see from the picture in this volume of interviews, the street paving is broken, the sidewalks are broken and littered, chain-link fencing borders lots filled with debris, and the street is lined with cars, some clearly abandoned or stripped. As Serra describes it: "After looking for a site in the Bronx for three or four months, I found a dead-end street that had stairways going up to an adjacent street, which would enable a viewer to look down on the piece from various levels. One-hundred-and-eighty-third was a leftover street in a broken-down neighborhood, unencumbered by buildings; it had no public or institutional character." One assumes this is one reason it attracted him, and indeed why he was looking for a site in the Bronx, a huge urban area whose buildings, substantial and even rather bourgeois, were being destroyed at the time in the most astonishing orgy of destruction of urban facilities we have ever seen in this country's cities. "Except for wrecked cars," Serra says, "there were empty lots and open space." Clearly Serra was attracted to urban grit: He was not interested in the conventionally beautiful or commemorative, or the decoration or embellishment of public space. One would be hard put to say what the sunken circle of steel does for the street.

Serra's view of public authority and government, already suspicious and antagonistic, was undoubtedly not improved by his experience in trying to get permission to place a piece of sculpture in a Bronx street: "I went to the Parks Administration, who told me they would try to assist me with the project for any site in that area of the Bronx. Their assistance was that of pointing out where permits were available. Finally, the police gave me a

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permit and said, 'Give us $250 and we'll let you put that thing in the ground.'"

The interviewer asked why he was interested in that kind of site, and Serra responded, "I wanted to build a work in a New York street and was told, 'Manhattan is out. Try the Bronx.' It could also have gone into a park, but I felt that a park would designate the sculpture as something different from what I wanted. Usually you're offered spaces that have ideological connotations, from parks to corporate and public buildings, and their extensions such as lawns and plazas. It's difficult to subvert those contexts." The term "subvert" immediately seizes one. What does Serra want to subvert? And why?

Sculpture that subverts

Serra points out that he had been offered "picture postcard sites" in Germany for a major piece called *Terminal*, sites "that suggested conventional public sculpture." The site he chose in Bochum in the Ruhr Valley is on "the main artery of the town, with streetcar and bus traffic." The picture shows a huge, dark tower, leaning over a streetcar going past, and threatening alarmingly to fall on it. It is made of four enormous plates of Cor-Ten steel, each forty-one feet high. All this is preliminary to what became the famous, or notorious, *Tilted Arc*.

The interviewer asks why Serra, in view of his attitudes, accepted a commission for a conventional site in front of a major public building. Serra explains: It is because "I've found a way to dislocate or alter the decorative function of the plaza and actively bring people into the sculpture's context. I plan to build a piece that's 120 feet long in a semi-circular plaza. It will cross the entire space, blocking the view from the street to the courthouse and vice-versa...." The interviewer asks: "So your intention is, in fact, to block the conventional views of the Federal building, the adjacent courthouse." That is certainly the effect, but Serra denies this is the intention: No. The intention is to bring the viewer into the sculpture. "After the piece is created, the space will be understood primarily as a function of the sculpture."

Serra's public sculpture was clearly intended to work in opposition to the space in which it was erected. Speaking of the huge

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Terminal sculpture in a central space in Bochum, he told the interviewer:

> I think if a work is substantial ... then it does not embellish, decorate, or point to specific buildings.... I think that sculpture ... has the potential ... to work in contradiction to the places and spaces where it is created.... I am interested in work where the artist is the maker of 'anti-environment' which takes its own place or makes its own situation, or divides or declares its own area.... I am not interested in work which ... satisfies urban design principles. I have always found that to be ... a need to reinforce a status quo of existing aesthetics. Most of the architecture that has been built is horrendous....

His *Terminal* piece, he says, "reduces most of the architecture to its cardboard-model inventiveness...."

To find most architecture, revival or modernist, inadequate is a legitimate aesthetic response. Few will be found to say a good word for the huge Jacob Javits Federal Building before which *Tilted Arc* was erected, and the notion of an artist transforming a work meant to "embellish" or "decorate" into something serving to undermine or criticize might appeal to all of us who find the specific buildings around the public space awful. But Serra was engaged in more than verbal or written criticism in an evanescent newspaper: He was building something large and permanent, and a permanent critique, particularly with its accompanying discomfort for all the people working in the building, and using the space, is another matter. He is attacking the awful by increasing the awfulness. To the misery of working in an ugly and poorly designed building, it was Serra's thought to add additional misery in the form of a sculpture that was ugly to most people (including the art critic of the *New York Times*), that obstructed the plaza, that offered no space to sit on, that blocked sun and view, and made the plaza unusable even for those moments of freedom when the weather permitted office workers to eat their lunch outside.

Democracy and repression

But Serra was doing more than critiquing the architecture: He was equally critical of the society and political order that it represented. In the case of the Federal Triangle project in Washington designed by Robert Venturi, Serra was commissioned

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to produce a large sculpture and had an opportunity to present his views to the commissioners of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, where he attacked Venturi's design. The design's most intriguing feature is a pavement that reproduces the original L'Enfant proposal for the plan of Washington. Serra compared Venturi's proposal to Albert Speer's work for the Third Reich. The interviewer asks how the commissioners responded. "They were shocked," Serra replied:

> They thought I was un-American.... [Politicians] cannot listen to an argument that tells them the architecture of Washington is ugly, pompous, inhuman.... It may be that in building a sculpture a block and a half from the White House, and within the context of L'Enfant's plan, it would necessarily be co-opted by the ideological connotations of the place. But I didn't see it at the time. I hoped to be able ... to build something that would subvert the context.

Serra's intention in subverting is perhaps more aesthetic than political—it is the architecture he is trying to subvert. But one cannot leave it at that. It is the society and the political system in which such architecture is built, and which it symbolizes, that is to him also worthy of subversion:

> In Washington, D.C., the work was defeated because it did not attend to the notion of elaborating on the democratic ideologies that this country thinks are necessary in terms of the decorative functions of art, or the political function of art. They wanted me to put flagpoles on top of pylons. My retort to that was I couldn't imagine putting a swastika, a flag, or a symbol on top of a Brancusi or a Rodin.

It is an attitude that insists on the autonomy of art, and insists that any attempt to celebrate political values is suspect and not to be allowed. Neither the swastika, nor the red star—nor the American flag. All are equally suspect, one is left to conclude. Yet societies and political systems do celebrate themselves, and some are more worthy of celebration than others. Art, it is true, is autonomous. When one insists on this autonomy for public art, all political systems are viewed with equal suspicion, whether democratic or totalitarian, whether they represent the will of the people or of a dictator. This is an understandable point of view, but it is not, I would argue, legitimate for *public* art, whose very point is to symbolize common values, common concerns, yes, a common political system, rather than a distinc-

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tive, personal artistic vision. From this point of view much public art today fails, but there is little of it that is as direct and aggressive an attack on the common values as Serra's.

What is most intriguing is that Serra believed the society would take this attack lying down like a pussycat. In Germany, where avant-garde art—if we can still call it that—has a higher reputation, that may happen. But we discover that even in Bochum, which accepted and erected *Terminal* at great cost, matters did not stop there. A Social Democratic city government had accepted it; the opposition Christian Democratic party made the acceptance and existence of this brooding forty-one foot tower of heavy rusting steel a chief factor in its electoral campaign. Members of the CDU, Serra tells the interviewer, "have plastered 100,000 posters in the Ruhr Valley denouncing the work." To Serra, this is practically fascism: "The same kind of repression was evident in the 1930s...." Once again, we find a confusion of political categories. The CDU was making the sculpture an issue in a democratic political campaign.

III. Public art and the people

The attack on *Tilted Arc* when the sculpture was erected in 1981 took a different form from the CDU's campaign in Bochum: no posters were distributed. But the antagonism it aroused among a host of people was no less intense. In typical American fashion, the battle was fought not only in public but through the courts—everything in the United States becomes a subject of litigation, and a public work of art is no exception. Many questions relevant to public art were raised which I will not explore here: whether the General Services Administration, which had commissioned the work, was breaking its contract with Serra in trying to remove it; questions of copyright infringement, of due process, of freedom of speech. The full panoply of the Bill of Rights was brought into play over a dispute as to whether a commissioned effort to embellish and decorate a public space was an offense that should be removed.

The art establishment rallied to the defense of *Tilted Arc*. The long list of those who spoke in favor of it at a public hearing is impressive: curators from leading museums, professors of art history, art critics and art dealers, leading architects, painters, sculptors, composers. Those speaking against could not have been

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more different: judges, federal employees, union officials, area residents. The confrontation could fairly be summed up as the world of art against the people. The National Endowment for the Arts, at the request of the administrator of the Government Services Administration, appointed a distinguished panel to advise him. The GSA expressed its willingness to relocate *Tilted Arc* if an alternate site could be found. The artist resisted this strongly: It was a site-specific work, for this space, for this plaza, for these buildings. In the end, after nine years of troubled existence, *Tilted Arc* was demolished and the plaza restored. It now contains trees in concrete planters, benches, and the non-functioning fountain.

It must be said that Richard Serra stuck to his guns to the end, with no attempt to mollify the almost universal opposition of those who worked in the buildings around *Tilted Arc*. Introducing one of the two volumes that have appeared on the controversy, Serra writes:

> [S]ite-specific works emphasize the comparison between two separate languages and can therefore use the language of one to criticize the language of the other.
>
> It is the explicit intention of site-specific works to alter their context.... Works which are built within the contextual frame of governmental, corporate, educational, and religious institutions run the risk of being read as tokens of these institutions.... In such cases, it is necessary to work in opposition to the constraints of the context, so that the work cannot be read as an affirmation of questionable ideologies and political power. I am not interested in art as affirmation and complicity....

One doubts that the opponents of *Tilted Arc* were concerned about affirmation: They simply wanted to enjoy the sun in the plaza, to have a place to eat their lunch, and not to be assaulted by a very large and ugly object whose purposes they could not divine. Carole Glueck of the *New York Times*, who, I assume, is no philistine, called it an "awkward, bullying piece that may conceivably be the ugliest outdoor work of art in the city."

Outrageous capitalism

Many of the defenders of *Tilted Arc* were even clearer and more direct about its functions. One defender asserted: "There is an opposition in the space of the plaza. The opposition re-

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flects the true oppositions in our society which bureaucracies work to deny: therefore, it has a critical function. The *Tilted Arc* is, I must admit, subversive.... Its very tilt, and its rust, both represents and opposes the building before it...." And another defender: "It *is* a confrontational, aggressive piece of art in a confrontational, aggressive town, in a part of the city where confrontations in court are practically the order of the day...."

Douglas Crimp, one of Serra's leading exponents (and the interviewer who elicited many of the quotes from Serra I have cited), asserts that identifying with a piece of sculpture only serves to make one's acceptance of capitalist society more tolerable. He contrasts the awful Bochum tower in the Ruhr Valley with George Segal's sculpture of Youngstown steel workers: The latter is too pleasant, and as long as we live in capitalist society, Crimp seems to be telling us, we must be confronted with that which outrages us. He does not seem to realize that the outrage of steel workers confronted with a Serra is more likely to be directed at the government that provides the sums needed for such a construction, at the art bureaucrats who commissioned it, and at the artists who advised that Serra is the man to do it, than at capitalism and capitalists, who after all have had no visible overt role in the enterprise at all.

The demand of the Christian Democratic Union party leaders who attacked the Bochum sculpture, according to Crimp, was "that the sculpture reconcile the workers to their brutal conditions by giving them something with which they can positively identify." But "their identification is utterly false ... the worker's pride is only intended to make their slavery more tolerable." Crimp ignores the fact that the CDU raised its anti-Serra slogan in the context of a democratic election: It thought its attack would make the CDU more acceptable to more voters, including workers. Crimp goes further: *Tilted Arc*, he tells us, is "situated in the very center of the mechanism of state power.... Serra's work does nothing other than present us with the truth of our social condition ... a public that has been socialized to accept the atomization of individuals ... cannot bear to be confronted by the reality of its situation." And so on, with portentous references to Marx and in particular his essay *On the Jewish Question*. We find all this, and much else, in a sumptuous volume put out by

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Rizzoli, and we really must wonder what these fulminations against capitalism are doing on those glossy pages.

What is so interesting in the Serra case is that Serra, in his antagonism to contemporary society and government, thinks of himself as in some way being identified with the working class. He works in heavy steel plates; he uses foundries with real workers to roll and shape them; he himself, as one of his defenders tells us, "is exceptional in that he is a product of the working class."

Elitism

We see a strange evolution in theory here, one that reminds us of the fate of modern architecture, functional architecture. It begins in the effort to be honest, simple, economical, to reject false and elaborate ornament, and certainly one major intention in modern architecture is to build for the working class. But it ends in the furthest reaches of elitism, rejected by those for whom it was originally designed, who seem to prefer their modest little cottages with their crude architectural reminders of grander buildings to the simple honesty of functionalism. How remarkable it is that it was a prince—Britain's Prince Charles—who launched such a devastating critique of modernism, and aroused such widespread popular approval for his attack. (We should recall also that Prince Charles was concerned about the declining inner cities; he had commended the community architects who worked with poor people in their neighborhoods, who respected their tastes, and who helped them improve their houses and their communities according to their lights.) In the end, the elite defense of a radical modernism produced work that the ordinary person could not understand; and the attack on such work was applauded by the common man.

I would hasten to say that this says nothing about the aesthetic merits or qualities of modern architecture and Richard Serra's sculpture. I know Serra has better and stronger defenders than Douglas Crimp, who sees aesthetic merit in Serra's sculpture primarily insofar as it attacks capitalism (though no-one but Crimp would notice it). But when it comes to architecture that must be lived in, and public sculpture that must be lived with, public taste is not irrelevant. One can argue it is irretrievably debased by modern capitalism, and therefore the

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sculptor and the architect must withdraw into unbuilt projects, or find a surreptitious opportunity to spit in the face of the public. Undoubtedly public taste does not reach the height of the times aesthetically. But one notes that Calder, and Moore, and Picasso, and Oldenburg, and Dubuffet all have managed to get their pieces put up without the kind of outrage that led to the destruction of Serra's *Tilted Arc*. It's possible for some artists to be ahead of and scarcely understood by the people, and still be tolerated. I would think we find the explanation for their success in the fact that they do not embrace the assaultive theory that Serra embraced—and, to come back to the beginning of this essay, that so many of the contributors to the landscape designs for Riverside Park South embraced.

One can understand and encourage the student or the adventurous architect who embraces the most far out and radical theory. But the important thing about the public artist's work is that it is not for him alone, or for an individual patron—it is for a *public*, it must be lived with, and while this need not check theory, it must check realization to some degree.

What is needed now

What does the modern city need? What does New York, the densest of great cities need? It does not need assault—there is enough of it in the life of the city, and the New Yorker does not have to be reminded of it. He does not need confrontation—there is also enough of that in the life of the city. He needs contrast, but not a contrast that makes the city, with its mixture of the harmonious and the jangling, the beautiful and the ugly, even more assaultive than it already is. He does not need to have its rare open spaces drafted for the purpose of teaching him about the city's problems—its poverty, homelessness, congestion, polluted air and water. We have many other ways of bringing all these matters to the city-dweller's attention. Conventional and unrevolutionary as it appears, we need what Olmsted and Vaux gave New York, release from the noise and turmoil and crowding and concrete of the city.

One is reminded of Tony Hiss's delightful and insightful book, *The Experience of Place*. He begins with a walk into Prospect Park, another major work of Olmsted and Vaux, and he tries to get to the root of our pleasure in it and our satisfaction with it.

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He says many things that may seem far out, basing himself on various psychologists, biologists, and naturalists. One scientist, he writes, finds that human beings have a "deep, innate preference for a grass landscape." And he relates that, outlandish as it may seem, to the origins of man in the most extensive grasslands in the world, the savannas of East Africa. We like places with a wide outlook, for that provided security for us on the savannas of our distant origins. Other psychologists say we have an inborn preference for winding paths, for roads that provide some sense of mystery—what will happen next? Man as an animal is defined by a need for curiosity as well as survival. We also need, they say, legibility, "an environment that looks as if one could explore extensively *without* getting lost." "All those factors that modern research has shown to be part of the human response to landscapes," Hiss writes, "are present along the path to Prospect Park; the long meadow provides savanna, prospect, and legibility; the path itself affords mystery; the tunnel gives refuge; there is plenty of sky, natural light, and information we can use to orient ourselves." Great designers, such as Olmsted and Vaux, seemed to understand all this on the basis of experience.

Young students should reach out, try, experiment. Even if the theory that speaks to them is impenetrable to me, they should try to realize the hints and insights and possibilities they divine in it. But when they design and build for the public, one factor affecting what they design must be public response. Leafing through a record of work by students of landscape architecture at the University of Virginia, I find the following:

> [S]econd year students took the challenge of designing a 'green space' for Ballston, located in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. This park was designed to create a civic focus in an otherwise centerless development. The chosen site consisted of a one-acre lot located between two high-rise buildings, and on top of a parking garage.
>
> Leaving all existing conditions intact, [one student] proposed a critique of the "instant city," a consequence of today's uncontrolled development. The design of the park acknowledges the systems particular to this place through the expression of collage. Imposing an artificial order on the collage, an idealized circular form occupied the center of the composition. The circle then breaks at the perimeter and spirals out to collide with the surrounding buildings, thus questioning this idealized realm.

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I can't say how the design would work in practice, or whether the people of Ballston would recognize in it, or appreciate, a critique of their "instant city." But if the students empathize with the people of Ballston, living in a featureless environment, maybe what is necessary is not to critique it, but to bring with their designs something they would not find in that graceless environment, perhaps humor, perhaps nostalgia, perhaps repose, perhaps even, if one is capable of it, something of beauty.

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Reinventing the museum

MICHAEL LIND

"ONCE YOU could tell a lot about a community by its church," the American architect Philip Johnson, himself a great museum designer, has written. "It was the place the city took pride in. Now it is the cultural center, the museum as monument." A cultural center could be expected to come under attack in a culture whose center cannot hold. Today the traditional conception of the museum as a dignified location for the display of artistic masterpieces is threatened both by ideological criticism from the left and, perhaps, by the market-driven substitution of entertainment for enlightenment. Ironically, neither of these challenges to the institution is as radical in its implications as a long-neglected critique from the philosophical right that calls into question not only the idea of the art museum, but the very idea of art.

The bourgeois museum

Critics who describe the art museum as a "bourgeois institution" could not be more accurate. Along with the public school

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and the public library, the public museum is one of the characteristic institutions of bourgeois republicanism.

What we think of as the traditional art museum originated on August 10, 1793, a year after the abolition of monarchy in France, when the Louvre was opened to all citizens. Earlier collections of art had been the private property of princes, prelates, and nobles, accessible only to a restricted audience; the British Museum, chartered in 1753, although supported by public funds, had been open only to approved visitors who had applied a year in advance. The French example inspired the British to found their National Gallery in 1832; other European countries created new public galleries (some based on collections that the French, under Napoleon, had earlier confiscated).[1]

"The museum did not exist for pleasure or the development of taste, but for the moral education of its citizenry," Arthur C. Danto writes of the conception of the museum in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. Just as the Frenchman was to be regenerated politically by neoclassical republican institutions, so he was to be inspired and uplifted by the greatest examples of the Western artistic tradition. This idealism inspired the tradition of housing art museums in grand neoclassical edifices. Etienne Boullée's visionary 1783 design for a monumental museum incorporating Greek and Roman elements and centered on a temple of fame, though never constructed, influenced countless later "temples of art" around the world.

Banal as they may seem today, the twin ideas of a national gallery and citizen access to all museums seemed inspiring to democrats and liberals the world over in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "Be it borne in mind that the greatest museum of Europe was founded by republicans," one of the fathers of the American art museum, James Jackson Jarves, wrote in 1864. "It was not until the people had won political power that the rulers threw open to them the treasures which had hitherto been enjoyed in selfish privacy, or displayed only as reflections of aristocratic taste and magnificence."

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[1]During his campaigns, Napoleon (in whose honor the Louvre was renamed for a while the Musée Napoleon) had the best art systematically identified and removed to France under the supervision of his campaign aide Baron Dominique-Vivant Denon, nicknamed *l'Emballeur* (the packer). Napoleon's brothers, installed on various European thrones, also had a hand in founding many of today's great museums—Louis founded Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, while Joseph helped found not only the Museo Nazionale in Naples but also a predecessor of Madrid's Prado.

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Jarves was one of a number of wealthy and educated Americans, inspired by a combination of civic idealism, nationalism, and personal ambition, who naturalized the French idea of the public art museum in the United States in the late nineteenth century. Before the Civil War, the institutions called "museums" had not quite freed themselves from the older tradition of the *Wunderkammer*, or curiosity collection. The American painter Charles Wilson Peale, who opened his own museum in Philadelphia in 1786, displayed not only paintings but a mastodon skeleton (the mingling of his artistic and scientific interests is reflected in the names he gave three of his sons—Raphaelle, Rembrandt, and Linnaeus). These eclectic exhibitions degenerated during the antebellum decades into "dime museums," which were little more than circus sideshows. P.T. Barnum, who bought up various museums in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore that had been founded by Peale and his sons, filled his American Museum on Broadway with jugglers, living statues, bearded women, American Indian tribes, the Feejee Mermaid, and even a Storm at Sea.

The rise of the Met

The greatest, if not the first, nineteenth-century American museum of art (in the Louvre, rather than the Barnum, sense) was the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.[2] In 1870, under the leadership of John Jay (grandson of the first U.S. Supreme Court Justice), the Union League Club appointed a Committee of Fifty to establish a great New York museum. Most of the members of the Committee of Fifty were wealthy businessmen; its charter was drafted by the greatest corporate lawyer of the era, Joseph H. Choate. At the inauguration of the Metropolitan in 1880, Choate addressed the class to which he belonged:

> Think of it, ye millionaires of many markets—what glory may yet be yours if you only listen to our advice, to convert pork into porcelain, grain and produce into priceless pottery, the rude ores of commerce into sculptured marble, and railroad shares and mining stocks ... into the glorified canvas of the world's masters, that shall adorn these walls for centuries.

[2]Scholars disagree about what was the first true art museum in the United States—the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (1805), the Trumbull Gallery at Yale (1832), or the Hartford Atheneum (1844).

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In the words of James N. Wood (writing in the *New Criterion*), support for the art museum in the United States "was born of the conviction that improvement of the public taste was a responsibility of both democratic government and private wealth, a conviction grounded in pragmatism and personal and national self-interest as much as in idealism." The American museum, like the United States itself, has been a mixture of egalitarian democracy and snobbish plutocracy. The acquisition of an art museum by a city (like a local symphony orchestra) has traditionally been a source of civic pride in communities across the country; while the public has benefited, the self-perpetuating boards of these institutions have usually been clubbish associations of the local gentry. The model was the Metropolitan board; during his presidency, beginning in 1904, J.P. Morgan (who spent almost half his fortune on the world's greatest private collection of art) filled "the vacancies on the board with millionaires of his own choosing—men like Henry Walters, Henry Clay Frick, John G. Johnson, George F. Baker, and Edward S. Harkness—and as a result the Metropolitan's board of trustees was not only the most exclusive club in New York, but also, without a doubt, the richest."[3]

Far from representing a violation of the ideal of the republican museum, its enlisting of private fortunes for public purposes arguably fulfills it. Bourgeois republicanism did not promise to eliminate competition for individual distinction, only to privatize it, to replace the zero-sum contest of families for titles with the contest of individuals for other kinds of distinction. Of all the uses to which wealth can be put, surely there are few that are less antisocial than endowing a public museum. A millionaire who amasses a fine collection of art and then gives it to a public institution is combining conspicuous consumption with civic generosity. The traditional art museum, one might say, is the potlatch of the bourgeoisie.

Attacks on the temple

Radical critiques of the art museum are almost as old as this relatively young institution itself. In the early twentieth century, Randolph Bourne criticized the Arnoldian definition of high cul-

[3]Calvin Tomkins, *Merchants and Masterpieces* (New York: Dutton, 1970), p. 100.

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ture in terms that represented an implicit condemnation of the temple-of-art museum:

> If your training has been to learn and appreciate the best that has been taught and done in the world, it has not been to discriminate between the significant and the irrelevant that the experience of every day is flinging up in your face. Civilized life is really one aesthetic challenge after another.... To have learned to appreciate a Mantegna and a Japanese print, and Dante and Debussy, and not to have learned nausea at Main Street, means an art education which is not merely worthless but destructive.

John Cotton Dana (1856-1929), a president of the American Library Association, anticipated many of the themes of later radicals in the early twentieth century when he founded the Newark Museum, an understated building on a side street (foreshadowing the Museum of Modern Art in these two respects). In his 1920 book, *A Plan for a New Museum*, Dana wrote:

> Probably no more useless public institution ... was ever devised than that popular ideal, the classical building of a museum of art, filled with rare and costly objects... To its community it gives a specious promise of artistic regeneration, and it permits those who visit it to put on certain integuments of culture which, although they do not conceal aesthetic nakedness, inhibit the free exercise of both intellect and sensibility.

Rather than concentrate on masterpieces, Dana put on exhibits of New Jersey textiles and sought to improve the design of everyday objects. He also sought to integrate the museum into the life of the community through school loans and a branch museum program. In the era of William James and John Dewey, this kind of disparagement of book-learning and gallery-going in favor of "life" and "reality" was quite common. The project of eliminating distinctions between the fine and applied arts (often accompanied by a provincial American hostility to European high culture) was taken up in the first half of the twentieth century by designers like Frank Lloyd Wright and Norman Bel Geddes (the British cognate of this movement had produced William Morris and John Ruskin some time earlier).[4]

[4]It should be noted that the traditional museum also sought to influence contemporary design, by providing practicing artists, architects, and designers with examples of the best of classical art.

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The establishment of the Museum of Modern Art in 1929, and the postwar domination of modern art by the New York School, soon made this kind of homespun populism look parochial and quaint. Like the populists, Alfred H. Barr and the patrons of MOMA sought to promote good design in utilitarian products and reduce the distance between high art and life; the resemblance of the museum's front to a storefront or automobile showroom has often been remarked upon. Nevertheless, MOMA, engaged in missionary work for the newest European modernism, was based on a rejection of the contrast between the wholesome and American and the elitist and foreign. MOMA proved that Americans could look to Europe without betraying themselves, and could be sophisticated without being reactionary fuddy-duddies. Just when the art museum seemed on the verge of becoming a relic of the era of gaslight and frock coats, MOMA and its epigones gave it a new lease on life—at least for a while.

New criticisms

Today, as in the past, the museum has critics who claim that it is an aristocratic institution out of touch with modern life. Their specific charges, however, reflect the changes that have taken place in American intellectual life since the 1960s.

The anti-museum populists of the past, like the Old Left, were universalists, who far from objecting to modern, industrial civilization, wanted to extend its benefits to the masses. Their basic goals—the housing of most of the population in spacious, well-lighted homes equipped with the most advanced modern appliances—were achieved by the mid-twentieth century, not by socialist planners, as many had expected, but by corporate capitalists and suburban real estate developers. No sooner was Frank Lloyd Wright's vision of "Usonia," a blend of country and city, realized in the suburbs (each with its own "community arts center" run by earnest middle-class ladies instead of imperious Morgans and Fricks) than the New Left appeared and denounced the whole thing. Taking the material comforts of consumer capitalism for granted, younger thinkers on the left concentrated on a variety of more subtle grievances.

Contemporary criticisms of the museum tend to reflect the division on the left between the particularists, such as ethnic

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minority activists and feminists, and what John Patrick Diggins, in *The Rise and Fall of the American Left*, calls the Academic Left, produced by "the New Left's finding an afterlife in the academic world." Of the two, the particularists tend to be both less philosophical and more conservative, in the sense that they do not so much want to replace the museum as to be represented according to their numbers in the population in museum exhibits and leadership.

Particularism

One writer for the London *Times* summarized particularist complaints in the America of the 1960s and early 1970s as follows:

> Museums are run by the rich white establishment for the rich white establishment. Protestors feel that other ethnic groups, including that paraethnic group the female sex, are not allowed to project their own identity through the museum exhibits and activities. All they can expect from their museums is a neatly packaged dose of traditional, white, masculine culture.

This sentiment continues to be expressed. In January 1991, writing in the *Boston Globe*, Patti Hartigan and Diane E. Lewis condemned the Boston Museum of Fine Arts because it "continues to reflect the values and Eurocentric art traditions of the city's elite." Around the same time Peggy Cooper Cafritz, a wealthy Washington patron of the arts, wrote a *Washington Post* op-ed calling for affirmative action in the National Gallery of Art, the Hirshhorn, the Corcoran Gallery, and other museums, blaming the pathologies of the black underclass in part on the fact that "their culture has been taken from them—unrecognized and undervalued by the larger world." (One recalls that the word "patronizing" has more than one meaning.) In 1983, S. Dillon Ripley, then director of the Smithsonian, called in *Smithsonian* magazine for increased attention to African, Middle Eastern, and Asian cultures for reasons that were anything but aesthetic:

> As a nation, we have subjected these parts of the world, particularly since World War II, to a kind of disrespect. So, we can't expect the people there to respect us. Our museums have this tremendous obligation to tell Americans about this part of the world, and to help them learn what that is all about.

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Postmodernism

If the particularists and their allies want to rearrange the places at the table, members of the Academic Left tend to question the existence of the table itself. Postmodern critics, whose interests are somewhat more metaphysical than those of multiculturalists, are less disturbed by the absence of proportional representation of women and minorities than by the very notion of aesthetic hierarchies. "The postmodern ideal," according to Kay Larson in *New York* magazine, "is a museum based not on 'hero' objects but on a collaborative level of quality in which things work together because none screams its moral superiority." Eugenio Donato, for example, in an essay entitled "The Museum's Furnace: Notes Toward a Contextual Reading of Bouvard and Pécuchet," dives into even deeper waters, to struggle with the museum's impossible task of "representation": "Representation of nature, representation of the globe, representation of history, the Museum believed it possible to make visible the implicit order of Nature and of History. It failed."

Conscious of charges that such writing represents a new form of scholasticism, many members of the Academic Left try to link their scholarship with their politics by claiming that they are actually liberating the public, by demystifying discourses that allegedly serve the structures of power in subtle ways. The artist Hans Haacke, in an essay entitled "Museums, Managers of Consciousness," has attacked the "Gospel of art for art's sake" which "isolates art and postulates its self-sufficiency, as if art had or followed rules which are impervious to the social environment"—an environment which in reality is organized to meet the needs of corporate capitalism. In an article in *Parallélogramme,* a Canadian art journal, Cheryl Meszaros, the Education Coordinator at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, writes that "Louis Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses" can be applied to the museum:

> Through the ideological state apparatuses of the school, state and family (and I would add the museum and gallery), information is deposited in the public mind and withdrawn at will by those in power. By carefully choosing (read censoring) the "deposits" of meaning, the dominant ideology is easily and endlessly reproduced.

A skeptic might wonder whether a state with an ideology to reinforce would not be wiser to do so through the popular me-

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dia, rather than try to brainwash the relatively small class of museum- and gallery-goers by extremely subtle means. But for the sake of argument let us stipulate the premise that museums are "ideological state apparatuses." Two options are possible to elude the bourgeois thought police who have made the art museum their instrument.

Strategies for subversion

One strategy involves creating new institutions for displaying art which are *not* "ideological state apparatuses" (Meszaros favors "artist-run centers," or arcs). One of these, the Anonymous Museum, opened in a Chicago warehouse in the fall of 1991. In its effort to avoid contamination by the ideals of the traditional museum—the authority of the curator, the "masterpiece," personal style, and genius—the Anonymous Museum promulgated elaborate rules. Artists chosen by the (anonymous) board of directors could display pieces for a few weeks, after which other artists would have the right to alter them at will.

This experiment, as might be expected, collapsed into banality and puerility. One artist's large sign reading "What most people would do" was creatively altered by another artist to read "Wham, Pee, d do"—the scatology of the kindergarten. And the anonymity of the Anonymous Museum's board did not last, because, as one critic notes in *New Art Examiner*, "it is only [the] reputation of those names that made their $12,000 National Endowment for the Arts grant a possibility." The experiment raised interesting questions—if one artist steals from another on show in the Anonymous Museum, is that plagiarism? Didn't nomination of artists by not-so-anonymous directors simply restore the cliquishness of the establishment museum in a new form? As utopians throughout history have discovered, the attempt to dispense with authority altogether only leads to its resurgence in disguise.

As mention of the NEA grant suggests, there is one very basic problem with a strategy of eluding the traps of bourgeois culture by means of institutions like the Anonymous Museum: Many of the same people who favor alternative, non-traditional art institutions demand that they be funded by the government. It is hard to see how a government-funded local arts center is

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less of an "ideological state apparatus" than a museum that depends largely on individual and corporate donations. Real political revolutionaries do not demand government subsidies for their revolutions; and aesthetic revolutionaries should be content with following the example of the organizers of the *Salon des refusées* in 1863.

Another strategy for would-be radical reformers is working within the state-dominated museum to subvert the "perpetuation" of the supposed "ideology" of the state, or corporate elite. Presumably this was what the curators of the Museum of Modern Art had in mind in the winter of 1991-1992, when they put on a show called "*Dis*locations," featuring among other things a piece called *Other Vietnam Memorial*—a giant Rolodex engraved with Vietnamese names (get it?)—and a video of a black man who says, "I'm not sneaky, I'm not scary...." "Dis" is black slang, meaning "to show disrespect for"; the point of the show, one gathers, was to show disrespect for both mainstream American society and the idea of the museum as a home for timeless masterpieces rather than ephemeral propaganda.

At times, the effort to subvert the museum from within gets even cruder. Among Hans Haacke's artistic projects devoted to exposing the connection between corporate money and museum authority was a collection of aluminum plaques reproducing statements by such members of the corporate elite as David Rockefeller, Vice Chairman of the Museum of Modern Art: "Promotion of the arts can improve the morale of employees and help attract qualified personnel." For a subtler example of this approach, one can turn to a recent exhibit, "Mining the Museum," at Baltimore's Maryland Historical Society. To draw attention to the neglect of the history of Maryland's black community, New York performance artist Fred Wilson employs items from the museum's collection in evocative juxtaposition—for example, a pair of iron shackles amid elaborate goblets and tankards once owned by the region's elite. Wilson provides a superior example of the strategy of displaying traditional material in such a way as to subvert middle-class conceptions and impart left-liberal opinions. This strategy of turning the bourgeois museum against the bourgeoisie, as it were, is obviously more appealing to members of the art world's managerial elite than exile to grubby little alternative art spaces.

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From temple to big top

Its replacement or transformation by self-conscious radicals may be the least of the traditional museum's worries. The erosion of the temple-of-art ideal by the pressures of commercialism is a more subtle but arguably more pervasive threat.

In his 1938 book, *The Culture of Cities*, Lewis Mumford complained, "Patrons and public alike, the nouveau riche of the metropolis are culture shoppers. They tend to transform the chief institutions of learning into vast department stores...." Since he wrote that, the commercialization of the museum has grown much more pronounced. Jacques Barzun complains in *Harper's*, "Museums and libraries have entered the retail and mail-order businesses: they sell books, facsimiles of art objects, cuff links, ashtrays, calendars, and reproductions of drawings and paintings in all sizes." "We now take it for granted," Hilton Kramer has written, "that the art museum is an appropriate place in which to order lunch or dinner, buy something to wear, do our Christmas shopping, see a movie, listen to a concert, attend a lecture on anything under the sun, possibly even art." As a result of the commercialization of the museum, "the palace-of-art, or temple-of-art, ambiance has been dramatically supplanted by the atmosphere of an emporium, a recreational facility, or a transportation center." Lest it be thought that this criticism is a specialty of the right, listen to Suzi Gablik, warning in *Has Modernism Failed?* that "a commercial morality can only have the same effect on art as it has had on book publishing: the promotion of mediocre work through aggressive forms of mass-marketing and advertising." Perhaps it is appropriate that France, which in the Louvre provided the model for countless temples of art, has done the same for the museum-as-shopping-mall-of-art in the Pompidou center and I.M. Pei's underground addition to the Louvre.

Some of this criticism of the commercialized museum may be overdrawn; surely there are genuine educational benefits in attracting more museum-goers, at least to significant exhibits. Still, while the damage they do, if any, may be exaggerated both by stodgy traditionalists and the anticapitalist left, there is no doubt that a new breed of museum directors and fund-raisers is transforming the formerly staid world of the museum. Since becoming its director in 1988, Thomas Krens has been criticized for trying

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to turn the Guggenheim into a multinational corporation, with projected franchise museums in Bilbao, Spain, and Salzburg, Austria. (Krens also oversaw the restoration of Frank Lloyd Wright's Fifth Avenue building.) According to a feasibility study for the Bilbao project, "at the admission [of] seven dollars per adult, most people are relatively price insensitive."

Museum boosterism seems to be driven by the increased ambitions of directors and trustees, rather than by rising costs alone. Whatever the reason for it, the addiction of the museum to cash encourages the blockbuster show, the middle-brow extravaganza: King Tut, Wyeth, Fredrick Church. This profit-driven boosterism tends to vulgarize the museum incidentally, at the very time that left-minded curators celebrate vulgarity deliberately.

The avant-garde, however opposed it may be in theory to capitalism, in practice feeds upon the same thing: sensational originality, what the critic Robert Hughes has called "the shock of the new." Avant-garde hype and shrewd commercialism merge in shows like the "Helter Skelter" exhibit at the industrial annex of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (better known as the Temporary Contemporary). Visitors were treated to blown-up versions of vulgar jokes, a mechanical manikin copulating with a tree, and even an "installation" incorporating a shrivelled human fetus (some things, as Wittgenstein said, must be passed over in silence). All of this was presented as the cutting edge of art, but anyone with a modicum of historical memory can see what curators like those of the Temporary Contemporary have done. They have reinvented the carnival sideshow. If today's would-be-shocking art museum exhibition serves any deep human needs at all, it is those once satisfied by a glimpse, at the midway, of a bearded lady, or Siamese twins (the sculptor Victor Estrada actually contributed Siamese twins to the "Helter Skelter" exhibit—his 30-foot *Baby/Baby* consists of two enormous infants joined at the groin).

The irony is delectable. The abandonment of the traditional conception of the museum as a noble temple of art, by radicals and hucksters alike, has inadvertently led to the reinvention of the antebellum American "dime museum." Repudiate the idealism of the Louvre, and you are left with the crowd-pleasing diversions of the circus. Trendy curators and empire-building museum managers alike might find little to disagree with in the

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words of the proprietor of the original "American Museum" on Broadway, P.T. Barnum: "I studied ways to arrest public attention, to startle, to make people talk and wonder; in short, to let the world know I had a Museum."

Temples of art versus temple arts

A much more compelling, though much less influential, challenge to the bourgeois museum comes from the extreme right, as it were—from adherents of the *premodern*, of a tradition of viewing society as an organic, metaphysically ordered whole.

Long before today's war on the museum, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy was waging a lonely war against what he considered the triviality of the "temple of art" approach. Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), an English-educated Indian intellectual who spent the last half of his life in the United States, founded the first American collection of Indian art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston after World War I. (Because of America's racist naturalization laws, Asians like Coomaraswamy were not allowed to become citizens.) An eclectic thinker influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris, Thomism, and his own Hindu tradition, Coomaraswamy developed a sophisticated defense of what he took to be the premodern Christian and traditional Asian view of art as a range of activities integrated with metaphysical belief and social life.

"In providing aesthetic gratification and aesthetic enlightenment," Hilton Kramer has argued, "the museum provides one of the cultural pleasures and central needs of the good life. Anything that the museum does to corrupt that central idea (that is, by providing distractions from the experience of the art object) is a corruption of that function." Coomaraswamy took strong exception to this view. "We think of art, not as the *form* of our civilization, but as a mysterious quality to be found in certain kinds of things, proper to be 'collected' and to be exhibited in museums and galleries," Coomaraswamy wrote.[5] He called for "a repudiation of the view that art is in any special sense an aesthetic experience. Aesthetic reactions are nothing

[5]Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Selected Papers, Vol. 1: Traditional Art and Symbolism*, Roger Lipsey, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

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more than the biologist's 'irritability,' which we share with the amoeba." Endorsing Plato's condemnation, in the *Republic*, of "lovers of fine colors and sounds and all that art makes of these things that have so little to do with the nature of the beautiful itself," Coomaraswamy mocked the idea that genuine art was a matter of self-expression, "as if the artist had nothing better to do than to make an exhibition of himself to his neighbor or of his neighbor to himself." Kant and his successors have been wrong in thinking there is a realm of "aesthetic value," distinct from morality and politics and governed solely by its own formal logic. Art is, in fact, nothing more than craft, *techne*, which can and should be subordinated to social goals in a civilization ordered by an all-encompassing religious or philosophical *Weltanschauung*.

Rejecting aesthetics

This "contextualist" view of a society or a civilization as a metaphysical unity, manifesting aspects of a common spiritual conception in all branches of the arts, that is, of the crafts, is difficult to reconcile with the bourgeois, or humanist, conception of the art museum. The humanist, while not denying that museums exhibit, in isolation, works that were conceived of as "applied" art—from royal political propaganda to tapestries intended for a noble's dining room and paintings commissioned for a cathedral—claims that all of these works possess "aesthetic" qualities, which can be perceived even when (perhaps *especially* when) they are removed from their original contexts, and analyzed in terms of their formal qualities. Abstract art, even though decried by old-fashioned humanists, is the logical extrapolation of the humanist idea that there are certain harmonies, certain patterns, that continue to have a certain effect even when abstracted from particular pictorial conventions, iconographic traditions, and historic cultural contexts—which in short transcend the merely Western and address the timeless and universally human.

Coomaraswamy, while conceding that forms and colors might have some universal effect on human beings of different eras and cultures, had nothing but contempt for such low sensory stimuli. As he saw it, only when people have lost their religious piety, in decadent secular societies like the Greco-Roman world

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after the fifth century B.C. or post-Renaissance Europe, do they begin to pay attention to the form rather than the message of a symbol. "The man who still worships the Buddhist image in its shrine has in many respects a better understanding of Buddhist art than the man who looks at the same image in a museum, as an object of 'fine art.'" As he saw it, "The modern aesthetic approach makes fetishes of traditional works of art."

Although Coomaraswamy, like Dana and Bourne, rejected the distinction between the fine and applied arts (a distinction the art historian R.G. Collingwood traced back to the eighteenth century) he was not a populist, but an aristocratic Hindu traditionalist. He contrasted "the order that is imposed on an individual from without in any form of proletarian government ... a pattern of life that has been conceived by a single individual or some school of academic thinkers ('Marxists,' for example)" with his ideal, "the pattern to which the traditional society is conformed by its own nature ... a metaphysical pattern." The arts in traditional societies have a dual function: "During the greater part of the world's history, every product of human workmanship, whether icon, platter, or shirt button, has been at once beautiful and useful." The masons' craft, for example, was both a trade and a spiritual discipline; their tools were both useful implements and symbols of an eternal order. The only individuals capable of evaluating works of "craft" are their original users, or scholars who can imaginatively recreate their original context.

Art as anthropology

Clearly a "contextualist" museum would be quite different from a bourgeois "humanist" museum. There would be no place for the art critic, as such: "The art historian is less of a whole man than the anthropologist." The Coomaraswamian museum would showcase objects not as exemplars of eternal aesthetic values but as manifestations of a particular civilization's particular philosophical worldview or religious sensibility. It would, in short, resemble a museum of anthropology or comparative religion. It would be the museological equivalent of the sort of sectarian college about which Alasdair MacIntyre, a critic of liberal pluralism, has speculated—a school that forthrightly em-

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bodies a particular "tradition-constituted" and "tradition-constitutive" worldview, be it Aristotelianism, Thomism, or Humean atheism, and does not pretend to be neutral among traditions. No more than MacIntyre's college does Coomaraswamy's museum imply that there is no realm of universal value. The point is rather that what is universally human must be approached and understood through one or several closely related particular traditions that are closer to the mark than the rest. Truth—which, rather than sensation, is the proper goal of all art—will not be revealed in an epiphany to a shopper surrounded by relics in a cultural bazaar.

This approach—akin, in a way, to the "original intent" theory in constitutional jurisprudence—would discourage the promiscuous mingling of paintings, statues, and utensils from diverse societies, unless there were some deeper purpose to such a juxtaposition (as there was in the Smithsonian's "Circa 1492" exhibit last year, which provided a glimpse of the different regional civilizations that existed on earth in the time of Columbus). Ruins and remnants would be of less interest than recreations. For example, a contextual museum, if it showed an incomplete original Greek statue at all, would display next to it a reconstruction of the original, as the artist intended it to be seen, in all its painted, gaudy glory, perhaps as part of a large-scale diorama depicting a reconstructed temple portico or palace interior. If we are to be shown a collection of Egyptian ritual instruments in a glass case, we should also be shown a painted or sculpted reconstruction and explanation of the ceremony in which they were used. When artifacts are not thus put into context, art appreciation consists of little more than teaching us to admire the shapes of the letters of an alphabet we cannot read.

The primitive awe felt by modern museum-goers contemplating time-eroded lumps of rubble—a feeling which the Germans, with characteristic precision, have named *Ruinensehnsucht* (roughly "passion for ruins")—would be considered a sub-intellectual thrill by the stern curators of a Coomaraswamian contextual museum. For them, the mortal material and the touch of a particular artist would be of less interest than the ideal form. Those Shinto shrines in Japan which are destroyed and rebuilt periodically, so that the form remains unchanged while

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the material is forever fresh and clean, embody this conception of art perfectly.

A contextualist approach like this might conceivably restore the "Eurocentric," nineteenth-century ideal of the museum—but only by reconceptualizing it as the showcase for one of many world traditions, Western humanism. It cannot be disputed that there is a general classical-humanist tradition in the arts, consisting of a body of Greco-Roman motifs, subjects, and styles that were drawn upon, in different ways, by European artists in ancient, medieval, and modern times. For a contextualist critic like Coomaraswamy, such superficial continuities are trivial, unless they are connected with a distinctive Western sensibility, a particular Western way of imagining man, society, nature, and the divine. To defend the study and display of Western art in this way is to retreat from the purely aesthetic conception of art to the original idea animating the French republican museum—the idea that studying Western art makes better citizens. This time, however, the equation of the Western and the universal would be considered something to be proven, not simply assumed. For proof of the superiority not just of Western painting but of Western civilization itself, one would have to turn from "aesthetics" altogether, to ethics, philosophy, religion.

These brief remarks should be sufficient to suggest that today's debates about the purpose and place of the museum are far less interesting than the questions raised by Coomaraswamy in the early twentieth century. His traditionalist and historicist critique of the assumptions of the humanist museum, part of a broader conservative (even reactionary) critique of post-Renaissance European civilization, touches upon much deeper issues than the criticisms of today's scholastic left. Though originating in an essentially religious criticism of modern, materialist civilization, his approach could as easily provide the political left as the political right with philosophical ammunition.

It remains to be seen whether the contextualist challenge is taken up again and developed further. It may be that the defenders of the "aesthetic" could answer the advocates of the "religious" view of art with a restatement, in twenty-first century terms, of the classical humanist ideal of a morally and aesthetically normative "general nature" transcending cultural relativism. Whether that

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is possible is unclear. One thing, however, does seem apparent: Of all the critiques of that essentially bourgeois innovation of 1793, the museum of fine art, the most telling remains that of an early twentieth-century scholastic Hindu defender of the *ancien régime*.

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The new sound of music

MICHAEL MEDVED

RECENT PUBLIC opinion polls reveal a curious inconsistency in American attitudes toward the family. Most people in this country believe that the family as an institution is in serious trouble; at the same time, they're certain that their own families are doing fine. A November 1991 survey for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company produced typically contradictory results. When asked to assess the strength of "family values" in the society at large, survey respondents painted a gloomy portrait: 65 percent felt that those values were "declining," with heavy majorities agreeing with the statement "It's harder to be a parent than it used to be."

On the other hand, the same people radiated optimism and satisfaction when commenting on their personal experience. In the Massachusetts Mutual study, 67 percent described themselves as "very" or "extremely satisfied" with their family life;

Adapted from Hollywood vs. America: Popular Culture and the War on Traditional Values *(HarperCollins, October 1992).*

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identical percentages rated relationships with their children as "good" or "excellent." A 1991 Gallup Poll found 93 percent who consider family life "very important," with a similarly hefty percentage saying that spending time with family members provided them with the greatest sense of fulfillment in their lives.

Why do these conflicting views coexist? How can the overall condition of the American family possibly be so bad when the huge majority of our fellow citizens feel so richly satisfied in their relationships with their closest kin? Columnist Ellen Goodman describes the perplexing attitude that prevails today as the "I'm okay, but you're not" syndrome. Hundreds of millions of Americans apparently believe that their pleasant domestic arrangements represent a blessed exception, a rare island of sanity in an ocean of insecurity and unhappiness. Why should so many people assume that the family is falling apart when their own firsthand experience tells them that all is well?

The answer involves the influence of the popular culture, with its clearly demonstrated and uncompromising contempt for conventional family values. The music industry shamelessly promotes promiscuity; motion pictures focus relentlessly on family dysfunction and divorce; and television programs broadcast the deadly message that kids know better than their doltish and irrelevant parents.

In other words, the contrast between private contentment and public pessimism that shows up in major polls mirrors the huge chasm between our own view of the world and Hollywood's—between the relatively happy real-life experience of most American families and the grim and poisonous visions that regularly emerge from the entertainment industry. Those antifamily images have become so deeply ingrained in our national consciousness that few Americans can summon the courage or the strength to dismiss them as the destructive distortions that they are. The result is that the American family now *is* threatened by the troubling vision of human relations presented by our popular culture.

Pop music: As nasty as it wants to be

Perhaps the most damaging of all these distortions involves the glorification of sexual adventurism and the focus on physical pleasure as an end in itself. This theme is exploited by every

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element in the popular culture, but it is nowhere more powerfully expressed than in the music business—a mighty industry of staggering global impact that devotes nearly all of its energies to the endless celebration of the raw power of lust.

At this point I must offer a candid warning to sensitive readers: If you are easily offended by gutter language and graphic images then you are strongly advised to avoid the rest of this article. Unfortunately, there is simply no way to write honestly about contemporary popular music without violating traditional standards of decency. Discreet references to "raunchy lyrics" or "obscene material" cannot suffice; they amount to a polite cover-up that effectively conceals the extent and the intensity of the degradation.

If you are unfamiliar with the messages in today's music, prepare to be appalled. Even if you feel that you know something about the songs and videos that our children consume with such notable gusto, the specific lyrics that follow will demonstrate that the situation of the moment is worse than you assumed. In any event, there is no excuse for trying to protect the reader from material that is readily and regularly available to every teenager in America.

Consider, for example, the extravagantly popular and influential rock group Guns N' Roses. By many measures of success, they are among the most prominent and idolized musicians in the world today. Their 1987 album *Appetite for Destruction* sold an astonishing total of more than twelve million copies in America alone, enough for nearly half the teenagers in the country to own one.

Given the natural tendency of kids to listen together to music they enjoy or to share their tapes and CDs with friends, this means that the overwhelming majority of American adolescents have now been exposed to the following poetry:

> Panties round your knees, with your ass in debris ...
> Tied up, tied down, up against the wall
> —from "Anything Goes"

Or, as a tender alternative:

> Turn around bitch I got a use for you
> Besides you ain't got nothin' better to do—and I'm bored.
> —from "It's So Easy"

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Guns N' Roses' most recent albums, *Use Your Illusion I* and *Use Your Illusion II*, dominated the rock 'n' roll charts as the top sellers of 1991, and offered more of the same. "Pretty Tied Up" described a "bitch" who craved whipping and abuse from all the band members:

> She ain't satisfied without some pain
> Friday night is goin' up inside her—again

Another popular heavy-metal band, Motley Crüe, carried these sadistic impulses to their logical conclusion in their song "You're All I Need":

> Laid out cold, now we're both alone
> But killing you helped me keep you home.

The *Girls, Girls, Girls* album, which contained this couplet, rose to number two on the *Billboard* pop charts and sold over two million copies.

Irreverent humor?

Defenders of this material insist that it is a form of raunchy, irreverent humor rather than a serious incitement to sexual violence. Terry Higgins, however, a Milwaukee rock reviewer who specializes in the heavy-metal scene, recently told the *Chicago Tribune*: "I think the kids take the lyrics a lot more seriously than some of the death metal bands, who almost take a comic book, slasher-movie approach to their music. But if I had a fourteen- or fifteen-year-old listening to some of this stuff, I might not trust him to have the proper perspective."

Whether considered from the point of view of their creators or of their audience, these songs have nothing to do with romance of even the most fleeting variety, and everything to do with violent hostility toward women. This theme is made even more explicit in the contributions of another top-selling group: the rap musicians known as N.W.A. ("Niggers With Attitude"). Their album *Niggaz4life* zoomed to the number-one position on the *Billboard* chart just two weeks after its release in June 1991. In all probability, few American parents realized that the top-selling pop album in the country included songs like "She Swallowed It," describing a "preacher's daughter" who "did the whole

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crew" and will "even take a broomstick up the butt." This young lady receives the highest praise,

> Because the dumb bitch licks out their asshole ...
> And if ya got a gang of niggers the bitch'll let ya rape her.

Along similar lines, the Houston rappers known as the Geto Boys provided their adolescent audience with additional encouragement for violent and sadistic fantasies. In 1989 their album *Grip It! On That Other Level* cracked the *Billboard* Top 30 and was certified gold when its sales passed 500,000 copies. The most popular rap on the record, "Gangsters of Love," could hardly be more explicit in its misogyny, describing an eager sex partner who "opened my butt cheeks and started lickin' my asshole." The lead rapper knows how to reward such attentions, since:

> I'm a motherfuckin' heart-breaker, I have 'em cryin' for months
> 'Cause I would fuck their best friends and put a whippin' on their cunts.

With their first album, the Geto Boys managed to seize the public's attention without radio air play or the support of a major record label; for their equally violent and pornographic follow-up, the prestigious Warner-Elektra-Atlantic Corporation (part of the huge Time Warner conglomerate) enthusiastically agreed to distribute their work.

2 Live Crew

In light of the outrageously offensive excesses of groups like the Geto Boys and N.W.A., it is difficult to understand why their fellow rappers, the notorious Florida group 2 Live Crew, should be singled out as the focus of the sort of bitter public controversy that the others avoided.

The contents of their much-discussed album *As Nasty as They Wanna Be* (which has sold an impressive total of more than 1.7 million copies) generally parallel the themes of many other rap musicians. The only distinctive element in 2 Live Crew's approach involves their consistent emphasis on mutilating the genitals of their female partners:

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A big stinkin' pussy can't do it all
So we try real hard just to bust the walls.
—from "Put Her in the Buck"

He'll tear the pussy open 'cause it's satisfaction
The bitch won't leave, it's fatal attraction.
—from "Dick Almighty"

Let me fill you up with somethin' milky and white
'Cause I'm gonna slay you rough and painful ... I wanna see you bleed!
—from "The Fuck Shop"

I won't tell your momma if you don't tell your dad
I know he'll be disgusted when he sees your pussy busted.
—from "Me So Horny"

These quotations from *As Nasty as They Wanna Be* will give some indication of why Judge Jose A. Gonzalez of the federal district court in Fort Lauderdale ruled that the album was legally obscene. No brief excerpts, however, can properly convey the enormously depressing experience of listening to all of the songs in their entirety: The cumulative impact is mind-numbing and overwhelming. Bob DeMoss, who holds down the unenviable job of monitoring rock lyrics for the Christian ministry Focus on the Family, meticulously analyzed the contents of this album. In less than sixty minutes of "entertainment," DeMoss counted 226 uses of the word "fuck," 81 uses of the word "shit," 163 uses of the word "bitch," 87 descriptions of oral sex, and 117 explicit terms for male or female genitalia. Using the conservative estimate that each of the album's 1.7 million owners will listen to it at least ten times, this means that an average teenager who has purchased *As Nasty As They Wanna Be* will hear 1,170 references to genitals and 870 descriptions of oral sex.

Charges of racism

Unfortunately, any condemnation of rap music leads inevitably to charges of racism—to the accusation that those who question the messages in these records do not understand the African-American experience and are attacking one of its authentic expressions only because of their hatred of all things black. Luther Campbell, the lead singer of 2 Live Crew, has been particularly outspoken in portraying himself as the victim of racial bias.

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"Why condemn me—a black artist and entrepreneur—for my particular brand of adult entertainment?" he pleads.

His position has received surprising support from some academic experts. Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who currently heads the department of African-American Studies at Harvard, testified at the 2 Live Crew obscenity trial that the group actually exemplified a long and honorable ghetto tradition. He called their body of work "refreshing" and "astonishing" and compared its use of bawdy language to the works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Joyce. Gates insisted to the jury that lines such as "Suck this dick, bitch, and make it puke" actually amounted to an imaginative use of metaphor. "It's like Shakespeare's 'My love is like a red, red rose,'" the good professor helpfully explained (misattributing Robert Burns's most famous line to Shakespeare). "That doesn't mean your love is red and has petals. No, it means your love is beautiful." This invocation of English poetry to defend the content of rap music brings to mind George Orwell's comment, "There are some ideas so preposterous that only an intellectual could believe them."

Fortunately, some of America's most prominent African-American leaders stepped forward to disassociate themselves from 2 Live Crew's attempts to portray themselves as the representatives of a tradition of passionate protest. "We are particularly offended by their efforts to wrap the mantle of the black cultural experience around their performances by saying this is the way it is in the black community, and that they are authentic purveyors of our heritage," declared Dr. Benjamin Hooks of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). "Our cultural experience does not include debasing our women, the glorification of violence, the promotion of deviant sexual behavior, or the tearing into shreds of our cherished mores and standards of behavior."

Other black thinkers took a similarly dismissive view toward claims that rap performers who boasted so endlessly of their sexual exploits gave valuable voice to the gritty reality of the streets. Clarence Page wrote that "it is interesting to note how many of rap's supposedly authentic ghetto voices are, in reality, offspring of the black middle class dressing down and acting out behavioral stereotypes associated with young low-income blacks, mostly for the consumption of young middle-class whites."

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In the summer of 1991, a new computerized scanning system enabled *Billboard* magazine to confirm Page's assertion, showing that the bulk of record sales for the "cutting edge" rappers came from suburban shopping malls, not inner-city music shops. Jon Shecter, the Harvard-educated editor of *The Source*, the respected journal of "Hip-Hop Culture," noted that while "it's a cool status symbol among white kids to like and identify with N.W.A., most of the black community doesn't like them." In an analysis for the *New Republic*, Princeton graduate student David Samuels concludes: "The more rappers were packaged as violent black criminals, the bigger their white audiences became."

Equal-opportunity degradation

The most degrading messages in contemporary music not only transcend all racial boundaries; they also erase all gender distinctions. Female performers (and female audiences) have struggled to keep up with adolescent males when it comes to purveying graphic boasts about sexual conquest and performance. Christina Amphlett, the seductive lead singer of the Divinyls, released a surprise hit called "Lay Your Body Down":

> I'm the mistress of the night, no stranger to your fantasy
> Lashings of a recipe, I'm whipping something up.

Her song "I Touch Myself," with its dreamily erotic video played repeatedly on MTV, was described by *Rolling Stone* as "one of the catchiest songs ever written about masturbation."

Meanwhile, a "girl group" called Hole offered considerably darker material in their 1992 album *Pretty on the Inside*, with shrieking lead singer Courtney Love howling endlessly about turning tricks as a teenage whore.

Another all-female group, B.W.P. ("Bitches With Problems"), released a best-selling Columbia Records album called *The Bytches*, which featured a feminine reflection of the sadistic boasts of male rappers:

> See how much of a bitch that loves to be fucked ...
> Up in my ass, deep down in my throat ...
> But my cunt's so horny I don't give a shit.

Somewhere between the macho posing of performers like Guns N' Roses and N.W.A. and the "slut rock" of girl groups like Hole

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and the Divinyls stands the androgynous omnisexuality of the priapic Prince—described by prestigious rock critic Robert Hilburn as "the man who was at the absolute creative center of pop in the '80s." His 1980 song "Sister" featured teasing references to incest ("My sister never made love to anyone else but me/She's the reason for my sexuality") and by 1991, this fading superstar offered an explicit endorsement of orgiastic indulgence in "Gett off." He urged his listeners:

> Everybody grab a body, pump it like u want somebody ...
> Gett off—23 positions in a one-night stand.

He goes on to describe some of those twenty-three positions, including sex on the kitchen floor, in the bathroom "standing on the tub and holding on the rod," in the closet "under the clothes," on the dresser "with your feet in the drawers," in the pantry "on the shelf," and on the pool table where he promises "to put the eight-ball where it's sure to stick."

The lavish video that accompanies this erotic apartment tour features two spectacularly beautiful, blindfolded young women who are led into the orgy by oiled bodybuilders in loin cloths, while quick images flash before the viewer of literally dozens of semi-nude bodies writhing in ecstasy. On another number featured on the same five-song videocassette (released by Time Warner) Prince leers into the camera and croons:

> I am Violet the organ grinder ...
> I live for the organ that I am grinding.

This one piece of poetry could stand as a summary for everything that is most destructive in today's popular music: Nearly all prominent performers could echo the statement that "I live for the organ that I am grinding." At least in terms of the personalities they project to the public, these are remarkably one-dimensional characters, ruled entirely by their all-powerful genitalia. Seldom do they entertain the notion that a human being might be more than a collection of body parts and hormones. Life is nothing more than an endless series of conquests and seductions, occasionally interrupted by naked rage at the opposite sex. Consider what our children learn from contemporary music about what it means to be a man, or what it means to be a woman. Feminists have rightly complained that contempo-

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rary rock is deeply demeaning to women, but it is worse than that: It is insulting to the most basic notions of humanity.

Some leading pop ensembles may use language that is more polite than the graphic lyrics cited above, but the messages they send are no less lascivious. One of the top-selling singles for 1991 was a number called "I Wanna Sex You Up" by the group Color Me Badd—a quartet with the audacity to boast that their music actually affirms "wholesome Christian values." In the music video for her song "Open Your Heart," Madonna pretends to be a cynical, black-corseted performer at a sleazy X-rated peep show, and encourages a frightened but fascinated eleven-year-old boy to join the middle-aged patrons in watching her strip.

The sweaty and slimy single-mindedness of so much of contemporary pop has begun to trouble even some veteran observers inside the industry. Rock critic Steve Simels of *Stereo Review* writes of Madonna's retrospective assemblage of music videos: "*The Immaculate Collection* still makes me want to take a shower when it's over, and I think I know why—it's so nakedly, so honestly scummy.... I'm hardly advocating some sort of ethical litmus test for pop music. But we shouldn't pretend this stuff is value-neutral, either."

Joni Mitchell, the singer and composer who created some of the most memorable and poetic popular music of the 1970s, has also become disillusioned with the direction of her industry. In 1991 she told *Rolling Stone*: "Music has become a burlesque over the last few years—video's done that. Every generation has to be more shocking than the last. But at a certain point you've got to reel it in because decadence ultimately isn't hip. Our country is going down the tubes from it. It's rotten to the core."

Love me tender

Mitchell's comments acknowledge the enormous distance between the sexual messages in today's songs and the content of popular music of the past. Previous pop idols—including Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, and the Beatles—may have alarmed parents with their rebellious poses and the erotic edge to their performances, but they were tender, wholesome romantics when compared to contemporary paragons like Guns N' Roses and Madonna. The differences are fundamental, qualitative as well as quantitative—representing not only the extent of the titillation

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but the nature of the underlying fantasy it communicates. In the best-selling song of his entire career, Elvis Presley pleaded:

> Love me tender, love me true, all my dreams fulfill
> For, my darling, I love you, and I always will.

The vision of "Love Me Tender" stands light-years removed from the notion of romance conveyed by the recent N.W.A. hit "Findum, Fuckum and Flee":

> When the pussy holes are open, ready to fuck until my dick is raw...
> So come here, bitch, and lick up the, lick up the, lick up the dick!

The most successful singers of the past most certainly exploited sexuality as part of their appeal, but the reveries they described in their songs still centered on intense—and usually long-term—emotional relationships between men and women. What is most striking about the popular music of the moment is the cold, bitter, and sadistic edge to the vision of fleeting sex it promotes.

Even the Rolling Stones—the most notorious of all of yesterday's rock 'n' roll bad boys—are sentimental softies by today's standards. Their controversial come-on ballad "Let's Spend the Night Together" offers a lavishly indulgent and considerate proposition when compared to the suggestions regularly made on the radio in the 1990s; it's hard to imagine the members of Motley Crüe or Metallica willingly spending an entire *night* with anyone. If the Stones attempted to rewrite their most infamous song in order to conform to more contemporary fantasies, they might have to retitle it "Let's Spend Ten Hostile Minutes Together (So I Can Degrade You and Beat You Up)."

Are the kids alright?

Not surprisingly, kids across the country seem to be getting the message. In 1990, *Time* magazine reported on a San Antonio radio station that offered free concert tickets for the best reply to the question, "What would you do to meet Motley Crüe?" A sixteen-year-old girl responded by providing an elaborate sadomasochistic scenario, offering herself as the bleeding victim. A boy, fourteen, said he would give the band his mother to do with as they pleased. A thirteen-year-old girl wrote simply but eloquently, "I'd leave my tits to Motley Crüe."

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Such suggestions amount to something more than attempts at off-color humor: They represent some prevailing adolescent notions of the sort of encounter that might prove most powerfully appealing to an especially admired group of glamorous grown-ups. Younger children also feel the impact of the MTV model of interaction with the opposite sex, parroting the lyrics of salacious songs they can scarcely understand. Music analyst Bob DeMoss describes a college professor of his acquaintance who, while shaving one morning in his bathroom, nearly cut himself when he heard his six-year-old boy walking by the door and singing a rousing chorus of "Do you think I'm sexy—and you want my body." The father discovered that the boy had learned the song from the radio on the school bus he took every day on the way to first grade. A sixth-grade teacher from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, wrote DeMoss about a field trip she took with her kids in May 1990. During the long bus ride, her "good kids from good homes" shocked her when they killed time by taking out portable tape players and listening repeatedly to obscene rap lyrics by N.W.A.

Such anecdotes reflect the imperial and all-penetrating reach of popular music, as well as the fact that its most irresponsible messages are so seldom balanced by more nourishing notions. The most avid adolescent fan can listen for hours each day without once hearing the suggestion that truly satisfying love between adults might require some elements of consideration, self-discipline, or even sacrifice. Instead, the role model suggested by "Findum, Fuckum and Flee" straddles the globe, all-conquering and unopposed, as the ideal of resplendent manhood.

Responsibility

To question the impact of such messages is not to suggest that performers be stifled or their rights restricted; it is to suggest that entertainment corporations be reminded of their responsibilities. The huge recording conglomerates that dominate the music industry receive literally thousands of tapes each year from both aspiring and established artists; most are never released. If a company decides not to associate itself with a particular song for one reason or another, this does not amount to some nightmarish assault on that singer's First Amendment freedoms.

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The Bill of Rights never guaranteed every American the right to a national release by a major record label.

Is it not reasonable to ask that, along with all the other factors that go into the decision to distribute a piece of music, the record companies also consider that material's potentially negative impact on our children and our future? The very notion of corporate responsibility means that business leaders must at times look beyond the possibility of profit: There are some activities so loathsome, so destructive, that no decent entrepreneur should undertake them, even if he might make money in the process. Surely, the promotion to adolescents of ballads celebrating the mutilation of female genitalia falls into this category.

The Time Warner conglomerate recently bowed to public pressure and withdrew Ice-T's song "Cop Killer" in the face of noisy protests and threatened boycotts. The public should continue to apply similar pressure to the music business, not just to counteract the most outrageous examples of antisocial excess, but to change the industry's general focus. All Americans are now adversely affected by the mighty engine of our popular culture. The message it repeats endlessly to our children (and to the rest of us) offers a vision of life that is increasingly dark and degrading. As environmental activists protest the pollution of our air and water, so, too, must entertainment-industry activists protest the continued poisoning of our pop-culture environment.

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Bringing back the settlement house

HOWARD HUSOCK

IN ST. LOUIS, in a poor black neighborhood of housing projects, brick rowhouses, and vacant lots north of downtown and aside the Mississippi, residents have access to a network of help that money can't buy. Money, in fact, is not accepted. To obtain assistance—someone to fix a car, watch a baby, move furniture, or stay with an infirm parent—residents must themselves contribute a service of their own to the "resource exchange." Residents who aren't well enough to make "deposits," but who may well need to make withdrawals, can gain credits when volunteers from suburban churches and synagogues contribute labor in their name. It is a system that involves more than 4,000 people, 70 percent with annual incomes below $10,000. They keep track of their "balance" through a computer network with its own ATM-style cards, good at ter-

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minals at local stores, designed with the help of volunteer computer industry consultants.

The most noteworthy aspect of the Member Organized Resource Exchange (MORE) is not the idea itself but the context from which it arose. Developed without public funds and designed by a board of directors on which poor residents sit with suburban volunteers, MORE is run by Grace Hill Neighborhood Services, which organizes activities as diverse as exercise classes, an adult education center, and a summer camp, sometimes under contract to government, sometimes not. Loosely affiliated with the Episcopal Church, Grace Hill Neighborhood Services—most often called simply "Grace Hill"—dates from 1902 and refers to itself as a settlement house. It is a surviving member of a movement that was once a major part of the American approach to improving the prospects of the poor and life in poor neighborhoods, but that is today largely considered in historical terms to the extent it is recalled at all.

Known best for its role in the successful assimilation of Eastern European immigrants from 1890 to 1930, the social-settlement movement has survived, albeit in reduced form. In 1913, a publication called the *Handbook of Settlements* listed some 413 settlements in thirty-two states; helping the poor and poor neighborhoods was a high-profile cause that attracted both money and volunteers from the ranks of the affluent. The movement leaders included such prominent settlement figures as Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull House, who won the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize, Lillian Wald of New York's Henry Street Settlement, and pioneering sociologist Robert Woods of Boston's South End House. All believed that settlements—also known today as neighborhood or community centers—should be fixtures of American life. Today, however, the term "settlement" has become obscure and survivors are spread thin: United Neighborhood Houses of New York, one of three remaining city-based settlement federations, estimates there are now 300 settlements nationwide in eighty cities.

On one level, settlements fit well with current social-welfare trends. They often combine public and private funds, as well as professionals and volunteers; their activities are designed at the neighborhood level, in keeping with the trend toward decentralizing social services; and they are a private, nonprofit, audited

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means of providing the kind of neighborhood amenities that can reduce the sense of distance between rich and poor. Yet in many ways settlements provide an alternative to current social policy. Unlike categorical social-welfare programs—job training, mental-health counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, and so forth—the settlement exists neither to treat specific ills nor to serve only those identified as troubled. It aspires instead to be a recreational, educational, and cultural institution, a community living room or gym.

According to settlement-movement theory, anyone in a neighborhood—not merely the AFDC-eligible or those in a "target population"—should be able to use the settlement. Members of problem groups might use it simply because they live nearby; they will be helped through participation in community life, goes the argument, rather than by direct counseling. It is true that those settlements that have survived have had to become adept grant-seekers and nonprofit "service providers" to those with identifiable problems. This helps finance their core activities (recreation, tutoring, social clubs), for which there is generally no state support. But traditionally (as social-work historian Malcolm Bush has noted), settlements have focused on treating the poor as citizens, not clients.

Historical perspectives

To the extent the settlement movement has been examined at all in recent years, it has been misunderstood even by those who praise it. The movement began when a handful of nineteenth-century idealists emulated the British example of affluent volunteers taking up residence ("settling") in poor neighborhoods. Historians of the movement have emphasized its contribution to Progressive-era and New Deal reforms, ranging from the organizing rights of labor (Hull House sheltered Eugene Debs in the wake of the 1894 Pullman Strike), child-labor legislation, improved factory conditions, welfare "pensions" for single mothers, so-called model tenements and, ultimately, public housing. Settlements not only were effective advocates of such efforts but pioneered the systematic investigation of the conditions of the poor. (*Poverty*, the landmark 1902 treatise by Robert Hunter, then head resident of New York's University Settlement, is a classic of the genre.) Historians also note that settlements exposed many who went on

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to prominent political service (Harry Hopkins, Eleanor Roosevelt) to the difficulties of life in poor city neighborhoods.

Such praise portrays settlements as a kind of enlightened precursor of the welfare state. It implies that they have outlived their usefulness, and suggests that they should either fade away or adopt the overriding goal of lobbying for new public anti-poverty initiatives. Indeed, one of the few histories of settlements in the modern era, Judith Trollander's *Professionalism and Social Change*, takes as one of its major themes the unfortunate decline of settlements' "reform mission."

Other observers take settlements as they have evolved within the context of the contemporary social-welfare system to be the settlement model as originally conceived. Since settlements often have tended to become nonprofit providers of a variety of programs under one roof, authors Peter Edelman and Beryl Radin view them as vehicles for the improved coordination of services like teenage-pregnancy prevention, prenatal care, and family mental-health counseling. "A settlement house," they write, "is a multiservice center by another name."

Building community

But this emphasis on delivery of services and the promotion of reform overlooks core aspects of the historic settlement movement. These characteristics persist today, albeit with less visibility, and might be of great benefit should they again gain currency. Historically, the purposes of the settlement movement reflected desire both to assist the poor and to bind the social classes in a common purpose. For Jane Addams, the movement's visionary and theoretician, it represented a way to hold American democracy together at a time, not entirely unlike our own, when newcomers without knowledge of democratic institutions flooded the cities. Settlements were to bring the affluent and the poor in contact with one another by attracting idealistic, college-aged, upper-middle-class youths to settle in poor neighborhoods or, at least, to volunteer some time. Addams was under no illusion that benefits would all flow in one direction. She herself identified with those potential settlement volunteers whose sense of "uselessness hangs heavily upon them" and who sought an outlet for idealism. But the settlement pioneers did not shrink

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from the belief that the poor would gain from contact with those of greater privilege.

"The American settlement," wrote Addams in an 1899 paper for the American Academy of Social Science, "has represented not so much a sense of duty of the privileged toward the unprivileged ... as a desire to equalize through social effort those results which superior opportunity may have given the possessor." As it grew, the settlement movement sought such "equalization" in two ways. First, it attempted to expand the horizons of the poor (particularly poor children) as a precondition for upward mobility. Second, it tried to design activities and use the influence of settlement leaders to improve the conditions of daily life in poor districts.

The settlement interest in reform grew out of direct involvement in neighborhood life: Long before she sought pensions for single mothers, Addams agitated for improved garbage pickup on Chicago's West Side (to the point of running for garbage inspector herself). Settlement leaders' interest in reform should not, howeover, mask the extensive daily offerings of settlements. The settlements were a major presence in their neighborhoods, calling on contributions from large numbers of volunteers and, in time, core groups of paid staff. Much, though far from all, of their work focused on children and youth. Settlements provided activities of the sort that nineteenth-century social-welfare pioneer Charles Loring Brace, founder of New York's Children's Aid Society, was fond of calling "formative not reformative." Settlements brought organized arts, crafts, and music to poor children. At Hull House, Benny Goodman got his first clarinet.

Settlement leaders were not shy about seeking to transmit middle-class values. In Philadelphia, the offerings of the College Settlement Association (so named because it drew volunteers from elite Eastern colleges) commonly included a "penny provident bank," to encourage children to save and "hero clubs," in which members would discuss the lives of great persons who had risen from humble circumstances and other heroes of American history.

The settlement houses provided structure and activities for large numbers of people in poor neighborhoods. In a single week in January 1904, 1,680 children and teenagers made use of Pittsburgh's Kingsley House. Many young people belonged to

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settlement social clubs with a strong sense of group identity. Even today, club members from Boston's West End House, many in their seventies and eighties, continue to stage regular reunions. Nor has this tradition been confined to white ethnic immigrant groups. In Boston, one-time members of a settlement-house boys club in the Roxbury black ghetto stage reunions as well. Former members of the "Exquisites" include Carl McCall, who would go on to become president of the New York City Board of Education. (He is remembered by club leaders as a truant who frequented a local pool hall before joining the settlement-house club.)

Although settlement activities were designed to serve a geographically bounded area, activities were not confined to the immediate neighborhood, both in terms of who took an interest in them and where they took place. At Kingsley House, thirteen residents were assisted in 1904 by no fewer than eighty "non-resident volunteers." So popular was the idea of direct involvement in the lives of the poor through such institutions that the College Settlement Association, with settlements in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, had to turn some volunteers away. In the summer, thanks to its own endowment and the financial support of more than 900 individual donors, Kingsley sent children and their parents for a week of summer camp—which the settlement called its "country home." Settlements tried their hand at adult education as well, staging evening lectures meant to popularize academic disciplines. All in all, this was the settlement movement's golden age, a time when improving day-to-day life in poor neighborhoods was a cause with a high profile among the well-to-do, when settlements were well known beyond the neighborhoods they served, and when affluent volunteers served both as residents and as board members.

Settlement leaders were by no means unaware that some of those who appeared at the door were troubled, or that ignorance or bad habits held them back. It was not the settlement way, however, to define its neighbors in terms of their problems and seek to enroll them in programs organized around various forms of dysfunction. The settlement approach, rather, was indirect. In "A Function of the Social Settlement," Jane Addams recalls how Hull House dealt with a group of Italian women with "underdeveloped" children:

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> It has been possible to teach some of these women to feed their children oatmeal instead of tea-soaked bread, but it has been done, not by statement at all but by a series of gay little Sunday morning breakfasts given to a group of them in a Hull House nursery. A nutritious diet was thus substituted for an inferior one by a social method. Knowledge was applied but scarcely as the statistician would have applied it.

The professionalization of compassion

With the rise of the professional social worker in the 1920s the settlement approach began to lose favor. In a revealing illustration accompanying her 1930 essay "Possibilities of the Art of Helping," Mary Richmond, generally credited with pioneering social work as a profession, overtly casts the settlement movement as a precursor of psychiatric and family-welfare social work. In that essay, Richmond mapped what has, in many ways, become the contemporary system of individual assistance for the poor. "Poverty," she wrote,

> is not a political or even a social status, to be abolished or rescinded by an amendment to the Constitution or by a presidential proclamation. You cannot 'lay the axe to its root' because it has a thousand roots. It is like some noxious weed, which can be eradicated in time with patient labor, but only after cultivating and enriching the soil in which it now grows. Prevention is another of those words which has been much abused. Who that is familiar with the history of the tuberculosis campaigns in this country can ever place 'prevention' and 'cure' in antithesis to each other again? The two processes interplay at every turn, and cure, in and of itself, is a form of prevention, for we learn how to prevent by honestly trying to cure. *In other words, prevention is one of the end results of a series of processes which include research, individual treatment, public education, legislation and then back to the administrative adaptations which make the intent of legislation real again in the individual case* [emphasis added].

The logic of Richmond's analysis gives rise to a profession of social-work specialists, each with an understanding of the various roots of poverty, with a calling to individual treatment in fields designated by legislation and supported by research. Such an approach does not necessarily compete with the settlement house model; in practice, however, the settlement style, with its use of volunteers and emphasis on group activities and recreation, would

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pale in contrast to a paid, credentialed, apparently scientific helping profession. Beginning in the 1930s, settlement residents and volunteers were replaced by treatment professionals. And just as the advent of income-support programs, whatever their merits, undermined private charity and mutual-relief efforts, so too did the rise of the social-work professional undermine the settlement as envisioned by Addams, Wald, et. al., notwithstanding the value of individual counseling in many circumstances. As Judith Trollander has written,

> the new professionals saw themselves and their work differently. They usually declined to live in the settlement house. They tended to think of the house neighbors as clients, in effect telling them, 'We're helping you because we have M.S.W.'s, not because we're your neighbors.' In place of spontaneity and being available around the clock, they made appointments and treatment plans. Instead of seeking to do with the neighborhood, they sought to do for the neighborhood.

Settlements lost their community focus to the point that, as noted by Herbert Gans in *The Urban Villagers*, a Boston settlement did not oppose the leveling of the city's West End for an urban renewal program of luxury high-rises. Nor did the 1960s War on Poverty, with its emphasis on the involvement of the poor in running organizations to improve poor neighborhoods, signal a settlement revival. The theoreticians of the community-action program saw it instead as a vehicle through which the poor could be organized to confront the powers-that-be, a sharp contrast to the model of inter-class cooperation and transmission of middle-class values to the poor that the settlement represented.

The settlement legacy

The most impressive and telling aspect of American settlements, then, may be the fact that the movement has survived at all. Many individual settlements, of course, have not, and only a few settlement-style institutions have been established in the post-New Deal era. (Some are remnants of the War on Poverty's community-action programs; at least one, Cleveland's Harvard Community Services Center, was a spontaneous invention of its lower-middle-class black neighborhood.) Many settlement houses founded around the turn of the century have managed to persist by adapting to the changed social-policy environment. The ad-

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vent of government-funded child care and senior citizen meals programs, for instance, virtually ensures that during the morning hours all settlements will include such programs. Similarly, many settlements now use state funds to run drug-treatment and mental-health programs. Although settlements traditionally were not sources of charity, today's settlements often serve as distributors of surplus food or agents for emergency fuel assistance.

Still, despite the changes that have come with the last sixty years of social policy, contemporary settlements are not wholly different from those of Jane Addams's era. Many classic characteristics of the settlement movement endure:

Settlements appeal to a broad cross-section of citizens—not only those with specific problems—within a geographically defined area. Notwithstanding the general push for government social policy toward programs defined around problems, settlements continue to offer their neighborhoods activities that help the healthy remain so. A review of the activities offered by fourteen settlements in eleven cities finds that no settlement defines more than half its programs in terms of specific problems or problem populations. Thus the Morristown, New Jersey, Neighborhood House offers not just anti-drug programs but a "homework" club open to all. Omaha's Social Settlement Association offers not just "professional counseling" but "friendship" clubs for groups ranging from "latchkey children" to adults. The Harvard Community Services Center in Cleveland not only offers a program for teen parents but provides meeting space to the local Republican (!) ward committee and sponsors social clubs for youths from specific streets. The Friendly House in Worcester, Massachusetts, is available for weddings. Settlements also often offer physical facilities (gymnasiums, meeting rooms, and auditoriums).

There is some evidence that the settlement ethic of helping the community at large is strong enough that even a high percentage of government funding does not deter interest in offering programs for those who are not in a specific "target population." Thus, although Grace Hill in St. Louis receives more than 80 percent of its funds from government sources—primarily for activities atypical for a settlement, such as operation of a community health center and management of a public housing project—it nonetheless developed, without public funds, the "resource

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exchange" program for its community at large. My review of programs offered by the thirty-six settlement houses of New York City found that only 84 of 410 programs (20 percent) appear to be problem-based, even though the settlements as a group receive 80 percent of their funds from various levels of government. (Of course, a settlement may run a few large problem-based and grant-funded programs, supplemented by many more small programs open to all.)

Settlements, to a significant extent, represent a privately funded stream of U.S. social policy. Although settlements in some cities rely heavily on government, many receive virtually no public funds. The average level of government support for settlements in the eleven cities I surveyed was 33.4 percent. The source of private funds is significant as well. In most cases, a settlement's major source of funding is the local United Way and is thus a reflection of a community consensus that such institutions are of value. In addition, settlements typically charge modest fees for programs (e.g., a season's pass for use of a basketball court, or a materials fee for an art class) and thus must pass a sort of market test in their immediate neighborhood as well.

Settlements have boards of directors that link residents of poor neighborhoods with representatives of the general metropolitan area. The time has passed when wealthy benefactors comprised the sole membership and funding source for settlements. (One settlement official calls this the "Lady Bountiful" era.) The demand for "maximum feasible participation" of the poor, engendered by the War on Poverty, has led to neighborhood representation on settlement boards. At the same time, however, persons of means have remained involved. Mrs. Felix Rohatyn serves as board chairman of the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association in New York, Cyrus Vance is a board member of East Harlem's Union Settlement, and Nancy Bush Ellis, sister of George Bush, is a board member of Boston's United South End Settlements. Settlement boards do not link only the very rich and the very poor, however. More commonly, middle-class professionals serve on boards. The Social Settlement of Omaha counts the neighborhood school principal as its board chairman; Cleveland's Harvard Community Services Center board includes a local judge. Moreover, settlements frequently have institutional relationships with local businesses, churches, and foundations.

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A recent calendar of events at Cleveland's Harvard Community Services Center

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Christian Life Church	**2** AARP-IRS Youth Drama Adult Education (GED class) Drill Team	**3** Project LEARN ICC Adult Education Walden Street Club	**4** ECST Youth Drama Drill Team Rites of Passage	**5** Seniors ICC Teen Parent Alpha & Omega Fraternity KKASHIFF	**6** Project LEARN	**7** Drive Street Club Drill Team
8 Christian Life Church Eastern Kentucky Club	**9** AARP-IRS Youth Drama Adult Education Drill Team Ohio Mass Choir KKASHIFF	**10** Project LEARN ICC Adult Education CAREB CSU Deforest Street Club	**11** ECST Youth Drama Drill Team Rites of Passage	**12** ICC Teen Parent Rites of Passage KKASHIFF EPHAH Lodge	**13** WRAAA Proposal Class Project LEARN	**14** WRAAA Proposal Class Drill Team
15 Christian Life Church Neighborhood Baptist Church	**16** Head Start AARP-IRS Youth Drama Adult Education Prayer Group Drill Team KKASHIFF	**17** Project LEARN ICC Adult Education Rites of Passage	**18** ECST Youth Drama Ladies VFW Drill Team Rites of Passage JFK H.S. Alumni	**19** Seniors ICC Teen Parent KKASHIFF	**20** Project LEARN	**21** Annointed Ministries Prayer Breakfast Drill Team John Marshall H.S. "Hi Steppers"
22 Christian Life Church	**23** AARP-IRS Youth Drama Adult Education Drill Team KKASHIFF	**24** Project LEARN ICC Adult Education Alpha & Omega	**25** ECST Youth Drama Adult Education Drill Team Ohio Mass Choir NAREA CSU Alumni	**26** ICC Teen Parent NABSW Ward I (R) Ward I (D) KKASHIFF	**27** Project LEARN	**28** John Marshall H.S. "Hi Steppers" Drill Team Westfield H.S. Alumni
29 Christian Life Church	**30** AARP-IRS Youth Drama Adult Education Drill Team KKASHIFF	**31** ICC Adult Education Rites of Passage Board of Trustees				

Key

AARP-IRS = Income Tax for Senior Citizens
ICC = Inner Church Council
ECST = East Cleveland Straight Talk
KKASHIFF = High School Fashion Show Rehearsal
WRAAA = Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging
CAREB = Cleveland Area Real Estate Brokers
CSU = Central State University
NAREA = National Association of Real Estate Appraisers
NABSW = National Association of Black Social Workers

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Louisville Central Community Centers receives contributions from major local employers—Humana Hospital, Kroger Stores, and United Parcel Service—as well as a local dry cleaner and the New Zion Baptist Church.

Churches often use settlements as a kind of secular arm. The Friends Neighborhood Guild in North Philadelphia continues to rely both on Quaker funds and Quaker meeting donations of labor and materials. At the Loring-Nicollet-Bethlehem Community Center in Minneapolis, fourteen of thirty-three board members serve as representatives of eight different churches.

Links to the general community are even more evident in those few instances when a city's settlements form a federation, through which they exchange program ideas and may jointly raise funds. Thus, the Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association, a federation of twenty-seven settlements and neighborhood centers (the terms are often used interchangeably), has attracted financial support from one of the city's major employers, BP America.

Although they now have both administrative and program staffs, settlements continue to use significant numbers of volunteers. Virtually all settlements make some use of volunteers; many have a paid staff member whose task it is to coordinate volunteer labor. Bridgeport's Hall Neighborhood House names a volunteer of the year. At Cleveland's Harvard Community Services Center, high school students from a wealthy adjoining suburb volunteer as tutors. At Central Community House in Columbus, nine black law students from Capital University volunteer in the after-school program. At Boston's West End House, college students run after-school art classes—hanging impressionist prints to be studied by the mixed group of black, Hispanic, and Asian children who frequent the house daily. For many settlements, volunteers are a significant source of labor. The Loring-Nicollet-Bethlehem Community Center in Minneapolis valued its 1990 volunteer help at $15,000 and made use of 438 volunteers.

Do settlements work?

Almost by definition, it is difficult to assess the value of such efforts. In this, settlements are again out of step with the trend in American social policy toward merging social-welfare initiatives and social science. One can quantify the number of welfare

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mothers who, after a training program, are able to join the work force, but there are no obvious ways to quantify the meaning of after-school recreation for teenagers. Often, one falls back on anecdote and impression. For instance, the director of Friendly House in Worcester, Massachusetts, believes that the outlook of the unemployed adults who play on the house softball team has changed since a local physician became a regular member. Officials at the Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association are convinced that that city's Collinwood Community Services Center, situated on a tense racial dividing line, has, by offering a neutral site for meetings, prevented race-related incidents from becoming more serious. The director of Boston's Lena Park Community Center proudly notes that rival gang members from nearby housing projects use the center's gym without incident; the center serves as a safe haven in the neighborhood.

Moreover, there is reason beyond anecdote to believe that traditional settlement programs have value. Educators Shirley Brice Heath and Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin have, in assessing the characteristics of successful youth programs, described something akin to the traditional settlement philosophy. "What makes the enterprises that succeed different from those that fail to attract and hold the interest of teenagers? ... What they have in common is their diversity and their insistence that members feel that they belong to an intimate group.... [They] envelop teens in a socializing community that holds them responsible for their own actions." Settlements, like Boys and Girls Clubs, are still willing to use recreation as a draw to pull youths into just such "socializing communities." (As Angel Ortiz-Soto of Philadelphia's Dixon House has observed, "Kids are not going to pound down the door to be taught social skills.") John Kixmiller of Brooklyn's Sunset Park Family Life Center directs an extensive group-based after-school arts and recreation program held in a neighborhood middle school, in which neighborhood teenagers go on to become leaders of groups for younger children. He echoes Heath and McLaughlin in asserting that there is value to what he views as the neglected art of "group work."

"The group," writes Kixmiller,

> provides a cohesive matrix, a step removed from the original family, to help work the tasks of maturation. The skill of the workers goes into building a group that reflects the personal meaning of its

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> members. Creative projects, athletics, social relations, a deepening relationship with authority ... are all pieces of the personal meaning in the inner life of group members.

Kixmiller is apt to stop basketball games to ask players what exactly provoked a near-fight and how it might be avoided. Philadelphia's Ortiz-Soto notes that even mundane projects, like asking team members to find a way to obtain new uniforms, have great value. "If the players decide they want new uniforms," Ortiz-Soto has observed, "they will have to learn to organize themselves, plan fund-raising activities and carry them out."

The power of such groups is such in some settlement clubs that, in the case of Boston's West End House, not only do "alumni" gather for reunions but they have become the chief benefactors of a new generation of poor children, erecting a new gym and pool complex in a neighborhood not even their own.

New approaches

In addition to traditional recreational and cultural offerings, settlement houses continue to incubate original approaches both to helping poor individuals and to improving life in poorer neighborhoods. In response to the NCAA's academic requirements for athletic eligibility, Boston's Lena Park Community Center has forged a relationship with the Stanley Kaplan SAT coaching firm to tutor both athletes and non-athletes. The LEAP (Linking Educators, Athletes, and Parents) program strives specifically to place its graduates at historically black schools in the South, and leads a popular bus tour to these schools each spring. In Queens, the Forest Hills Community House sends "outreach workers" to known neighborhood gang "hot spots," seeking to draw those on the street into the settlement; through its Neighborhood Intergenerational Chore and Escort Service it hires teenagers to provide household help for the elderly. In a neighborhood in which teenagers are apt to be black and the elderly white, the effort reduces fear among those who have watched the area change.

Beyond specific programs and activities, the *idea* of a revival or expansion of the settlement movement can be broadly attractive to those who may otherwise be sharply split on social policy issues. (It is worth noting that the United Neighborhood House of New York, the New York settlement federation, has success-

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fully sought funds from sources spanning the ideological spectrum, including both the liberal Ford Foundation and the conservative DeWitt Wallace Foundation.) Those who believe that the prospects for upward mobility of the poor can be enhanced by acculturation—by introduction to middle-class norms—can find value in clubs and tutoring. Others, who believe the prospects for bringing the poor into the economic mainstream are bleak notwithstanding individual effort, are alive to the ways in which settlements can at least make life in poor neighborhoods safer and more pleasant. If there is a cultural assumption that unites these diverse efforts—and links today's settlements with those of the past—it is the implicit belief that, notwithstanding the development of the welfare state, those with middle-class means and values should disseminate those values in society through direct, personal involvement.

This does not imply that settlements in minority neighborhoods will necessarily have white staff and volunteers. Many contemporary settlements are led by blacks in black neighborhoods, for instance. A board of directors that draws from the neighborhood as well as from the city at large affirms the sense that settlements are community institutions. Such boards are, moreover, inherently non-confrontational: Members have the interest of the settlement in common and work together on specific projects. Thus, at Grace Hill in St. Louis, McDonnell Douglas executives work alongside former welfare mothers to plan the MORE project. In some ways, such encounters are at the heart of the settlement idea. Personal contact across the economic classes provides the poor with access to the network of casual connections from which they are generally isolated, as well as a sense that others have an interest in their situation. One can imagine an encounter at the settlement leading to a summer job for someone's son, perhaps even a college recommendation. Food stamps, drug treatment, and job-training programs do not do the same work of forging some sense of community across geographic and economic lines.

Prospects for a settlement revival

What, then, are the obstacles to a settlement house revival? Is there a government role to be played? Perhaps the greatest obstacle to reviving settlements is society's tendency to devalue

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their common sense approach. In a 1988 newsletter of the Philadelphia Federation of Settlements, for instance, Claire Berkowitz cited as conventional wisdom the idea that recreation programs are "frivolous." Such a view, she wrote, is "inhibiting and dangerous to the provision of social services in our neighborhoods." The tendency to undervalue recreational and cultural programs manifests itself in the difficulty settlements have in attracting what they call "core support"—financial support for their central administration and non-categorical activities. There has never been a federal "Settlement House Support Act" or anything akin to it. Settlements have survived by embracing some categorical programs, adopting government-funded programs (e.g., day care) consonant with the settlement approach, and by finding private funds to support recreational and cultural programs, as well as original, non-categorical ideas like the MORE exchange. Settlements have been handicapped, however, even in the competition for private charity dollars. As locally based causes, they have been included in city-wide United Way drives. Settlements as a form have thus receded behind generic United Way appeals. The settlement ideal, in which those of means play a direct role in poor neighborhoods, has taken a back seat to causes that have a higher public profile, such as the environment or disease research.

It may be, then, that the first step toward expanding or stabilizing existing settlements must come from more aggressive fundraising outside the United Way umbrella. Settlement federations in Cleveland and New York have successfully raised corporate and foundation funds which they, in turn, disburse to members. Local United Way chapters and settlements themselves should seek to put the settlement back in the public eye as an institution whose name is widely known and whose mission is understood. A 1950 Minneapolis advertisement, featuring engaging pictures of children and families, cut to the heart of the matter. "What Happens in Settlements?" it asked. The answer: "Camps, Athletics, Club Activities, Special Interest Groups, Old Age Programs, Nursery School. Product: Healthier, Happier People and Better Neighborhoods."

There are, however, any number of poorer neighborhoods that lack any settlement-like institution. Can new settlements be started today? Two stories suggest that it is possible but

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difficult—and that initial capital investment is the most difficult hurdle. Cleveland's Harvard Community Services Center was opened in 1968 when residents of the surrounding lower-middle-class black neighborhood were able to obtain a campus-like group of buildings that had formerly housed a convent. With the gift of the solid brick buildings, the community board was able to obtain foundation and grant funding to operate; the Center also obtained a federal grant to add a large auditorium. Today, the Center has become so central to the community that a new police substation was opened in a Center building. In Boston, the West End House was able to build a cheerful new $1.6 million gymnasium/swimming pool/club-rooms complex in the city's Allston-Brighton neighborhood but only with the help of a windfall it realized when its previous quarters in a valuable location were purchased by a major hospital. The $400,000 from the sale of real estate was matched by $400,000 from "alumni," as well as $40,000 raised in a door-to-door campaign in the neighborhood. Today, some ninety kids a day use the club after school and on Saturday, whether for basketball, homework, or community service.

The government's role

The Cleveland and Boston stories both reflect community demand for settlement activities—and the key role of happy coincidences in allowing new settlement complexes to be created. In contrast, there are also many settlements whose quarters are limited and dilapidated. (Boston's Lena Park Community Center, for example, has had to shut down parts of its athletic facilities for lack of capital improvement funds.) These conditions may argue for a government role in providing capital grants to build, expand, or renovate settlement facilities. (One could imagine surplus schools serving the purpose.) As Mickey Kaus observes in *The End of Equality*, good public facilities—whether parks, swimming pools, or gyms—can reduce the sense of impoverishment experienced by the poor. The isolation of the poor would be reduced even more should such facilities exist in the settlement-house context. In the case of new settlements, it would seem best to award grants to groups with a demonstrated ability to raise funds from other sources. Such groups should also have boards of directors that combine residents of poor neighbor-

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hoods with representatives of a city's political, business, and cultural leadership.

It is tempting to call for legislation to revive the settlement movement. It would be a mistake, however, for government, at whatever level, to wholly fund settlements, new or old, on its own, as it did with the community-action and Model Cities programs of the 1960s. The advent of government operating funds for settlements might well drive out private charitable support, along with all the beneficial community relationships that settlements engender.

It may be possible, though, to direct incremental public funds to settlements without a major new legislative initiative and without driving away private donors. Some current federal programs might, by simply mentioning settlements as potential recipients of funds, allow for settlements to extend their reach. The National and Community Service Act (for which $77 million was appropriated in 1991) might, for instance, allow settlements to gain staff for specific projects, or short-term programs, from the ranks of "youth corps" members (aged sixteen to twenty-five) supported by the $5,000 annual stipends for which the Act provides. (Boston's City Year program, a model for such youth corps, currently operates two after-school programs in low-income neighborhoods.) The Act currently provides for corps members to work in such locales as "hospitals, libraries, day care centers and nonprofit social service organizations." Although settlements seem to fall within this rubric, amendment of the Act to specifically mention and define settlement houses could be a significant step in bringing the term back into general conversation. The same could be true for the Community Development Block Grant program, which could be a vehicle for directing capital-improvement monies and some operating funds to settlements. One could imagine small grants to a revived United Neighborhood Centers of America organization—perhaps, in the immigrant-era tradition, to develop national citizenship programs to complement offerings targeted at specific ethnic groups.

A bridge between the classes

No matter what new sources of public support might come to the aid of the settlement movement, however, it is unlikely that it will return in its purest form—i.e., as a set of general

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centers for community life that do not include special programs for target populations. The bias in favor of problem-based programs is great in professional schools of social work. Too great a share of the revenue of too many settlements today is based in such programs to imagine them being pushed out *en masse*. This is not necessarily unwelcome, but it is problematic if settlement directors themselves devalue their institutions' recreational and cultural mission. As long as there is not a preponderance of therapeutic programs at a settlement—which presents the risk that the settlement will be stigmatized in the neighborhood—it may well be beneficial for those seeking help with specific problems also to be part of community life in general, where the focus is not on problems alone. Should new settlements spring up, however, they need not incorporate therapeutic programs in order to be of help to those with specific difficulties. The director of Boston's West End House—which offers only recreational and educational programs—nonetheless sits on a board of neighborhood social service "providers" and makes referrals for children and families.

Thus, revival of the settlement ideal does not imply a specific mix of programs. Rather, it would recognize that there is a need for a vehicle to link the social classes and to offer neighborhood amenities for the poor in ways that income redistribution and therapeutic programs by themselves do not.

Settlements offer an historically proven way of bringing some of the resources of the affluent to bear on poor neighborhoods, of providing organization in disorganized communities. The settlement house is not the only such vehicle one could imagine—nor the only institution that, historically, has met such needs. Traditional, but similarly devalued programs such as the Police Athletic League, answer some of the same needs, as do the social programs of churches. YMCA/YWCAs, Catholic Youth Organization activities, and Boys and Girls Clubs share many of the attributes of settlements and deserve similar consideration as being more than marginal contributors to creating and preserving a social fabric in troubled neighborhoods.

There may be a growing recognition, outside the remnants of the settlement movement, of the need to find ways to take on such a task beyond categorical programs for the poorest and most troubled. Jimmy Carter, for instance, has recently pro-

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posed an entirely new institution—the Atlanta Project—to link the affluent and the poor of Atlanta. "We ought to be helping," Carter has said, "but not in a supercilious, 'I'm better than you' attitude." In similar circumstances, for similar reasons, the settlement movement developed a century ago as just such a bridge between the classes. Rediscovered, it could serve this goal again.

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Is the Rehnquist Court conservative?

DAVID P. BRYDEN

IS THE Rehnquist Court conservative? Is the Pope Catholic? The Supreme Court is a divisive topic, but on one point nearly all observers agree: After several false starts, we now have a conservative Court. From this proposition, the only dissenters—at least in the academy—have been those scholars who prefer to call the Court "reactionary," to distinguish it from the "true conservatism" that—in the critics' view—would be more respectful of precedents established during the Warren- and Burger-Court eras. The Court's recent decisions in *Lee* v. *Weisman* (invalidating graduation prayers) and *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey* (modifying but upholding *Roe* v. *Wade*) may create a momentary lull in such hostile remarks by legal scholars, and we now hear a good deal about "the centrist

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coalition" of "moderately conservative Justices," but everyone still agrees that this Court is virtually devoid of truly liberal tendencies, except of course in the dissents of Justices Stevens and Blackmun.

By a simple head count, the Court's conservative label seems plainly correct. Of the nine Justices, only Stevens and Blackmun take the liberal side with any regularity, and even they—both Republican appointees, by the way—are conservative on some issues. Yet the heavy emphasis most commentators place on the current Court's conservatism obscures some enduring liberal advantages in constitutional adjudication. The Rehnquist Court's Constitution, I will suggest, though strongly conservative in some respects, remains profoundly liberal in less obvious but equally significant ways.

The Rehnquist Court's conservative reputation is due to its rejection of liberal efforts to create new constitutional rights and its tendency to trim back or narrowly interpret liberal rights established by earlier Courts. Fair enough: If our standard of comparison is the Warren Court, or the Burger Court, then the Rehnquist Court deserves its conservative label. But that standard of comparison, though natural and useful, has some drawbacks. Comparisons with other Courts tend to highlight differences and obscure continuities, especially if the differences are controversial and the continuities are taken for granted.

The fiercest constitutional battles today do not involve economic problems, the traditional political issue on which ordinary folk are inclined to be farther to the left than judges and other elites. Ever since the demise of the Nine Old Men in the late 1930s, the most controversial constitutional issues have been cultural or social rather than economic. They involve criminal procedure, the death penalty, abortion, homosexuality, affirmative action, school busing, the flag salute and flag burning, women's rights, pornography, and similar matters. On such questions, Americans are engaged in what has aptly been called a series of "culture wars."

In these wars, William H. Rehnquist's Court is rarely or never more conservative than John Q. Public's opinion. Most scholars don't realize this—or perhaps more accurately, know it but regularly forget it—because we travel in very narrow circles. But national opinion surveys show that on most socio-cultural issues—

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including separation of church and state, affirmative action, and criminal justice—the Rehnquist Court, as measured by its decisions, is *less* conservative than the American people.

Of course, no thoughtful person would desire a Court that faithfully reflected all of the public's prejudices. If public opinion were always right, there would be little need for judicial review. Yet in most of the areas where the Rehnquist Court is to the left of public opinion it is also to the left of conservative intellectuals like Russell Kirk, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Robert Bork, and on some issues—affirmative action comes to mind—the Court has upheld practices that neoconservatives like Irving Kristol generally deplore. So we are dealing with a phenomenon that cannot be explained simply as the difference between intelligent, educated people on the one hand and yahoos on the other.

At this juncture, I hear a voice saying, "True, the Rehnquist Court is not quite as reactionary as a conservative ideologue or the untutored citizen would desire. But it is, nonetheless, a conservative Court—one that usually comes down on the conservative side in cases where liberals and conservatives disagree." To respond to that observation, we need to consider another sense in which the Court remains fundamentally liberal.

Offensive and defensive victories

When a litigant obtains a constitutional right, he has achieved what might be called an offensive victory. Offensive victories are absolute: they nullify all defeats, within the scope of the right, in the political arena. *Roe* v. *Wade* exemplifies a liberal offensive victory. Defensive victories, by contrast, merely thwart the other side's efforts to obtain offensive victories, transferring the issue from the judicial to the political arena. A defensive victory is thus contingent, because it does not resolve the ultimate political issue. Depending on the political situation, its practical significance may be great or small. *Bowers* v. *Hardwick*, the case in which the Court refused to afford constitutional protection to private homosexual acts, exemplifies a defensive victory for cultural conservatives. Notwithstanding *Bowers*, liberals remain free to lobby for repeal of sodomy laws, and in fact they have been highly successful in doing so.

Concerning cultural issues, a "liberal" decision is, typically, offensive: It constitutionalizes a portion of the liberal agenda,

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trumping any conservative victory in the political arena. This was true of all of the most famous and controversial decisions of the Warren and Burger Courts, such as *Brown*, *Gideon*, *Mapp*, *Miranda*, the reapportionment decisions, the school prayer decisions, and *Roe*.

Conservatives sometimes obtain offensive victories—decisions invalidating some affirmative-action programs, for instance. But as a rule cultural conservatives are not even asking the Court to create new conservative constitutional rights. A "conservative" victory is usually defensive, rejecting or constricting a liberal constitutional right, but not creating a conservative right that trumps liberal political victories. Even if the Court had overruled *Roe* v. *Wade*, for example, the pro-choice forces would undoubtedly have prevailed very quickly in many state legislatures, and might eventually have secured an act of Congress, signed by a Democratic president, that had the same practical consequences as *Roe*.

Apart from the defensive task of paring back liberal rights, it is not easy even to imagine a cultural agenda for an activist conservative Court. Such a Court would presumably strike down all government-sponsored affirmative-action programs. Then what? The constitutional goals of mainstream conservatives, almost without exception, have been defensive. Few conservative jurists or scholars contend, for example, that a fetus is a person and therefore that any state law permitting abortions violates the Fourteenth Amendment. The chances of getting the Court to agree to such a proposition were nil even before the Justices' recent reaffirmation of *Roe*. Although liberals argue that school voucher systems are unconstitutional assistance to religion, hardly any conservative theorists argue that school systems without voucher programs violate the constitutional rights of parents who wish to send their children to parochial schools.

Although persons accused of crime have many constitutional rights, "victims' rights" are protected, if at all, by statute rather than by the Constitution. It is unconstitutional to try an indigent accused rapist without providing him with a government lawyer; it is not unconstitutional to deny his victim and her family the right to testify, after conviction, about the impact of the crime on them and what sentence should be imposed. Likewise, a court that admits certain types of evidence will be deemed to

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have violated the Constitution; a court that excludes evidence, however unreasonably, will not.

Children's rights, according to some liberal theorists, should be more amply protected by the Constitution. Conservatives, who usually take the parents' side, rarely or never suggest that parents have rights that school boards and legislatures may not override—that they have a constitutional right, for example, to veto "premature" or "value-free" sex education for their children.

Keeping score

Although most of the controversial decisions of the Rehnquist Court have pleased conservatives and displeased liberals, the "conservative" decisions have nearly always been defensive ones, in which the Justices either refused to create, or chose to constrict, a liberal constitutional right. Every November, the editors of the *Harvard Law Review* publish their analyses of the "leading constitutional cases" of the previous Supreme Court term. After perusing several of these student notes, covering the 1986 to 1990 terms, inclusive, I separated the decisions into five categories: conservative offensive victories (CO); conservative defensive victories (CD); liberal offensive victories (LO); liberal defensive victories (LD); and holdings that did not divide the Justices along ideological lines (N).[†]

As the table reveals, the conservative side prevailed almost three times as often as the liberal side. But as the figures also show, this disparity is misleading, because the conservative victories were nearly all defensive: Only four of them (8 percent) established or enforced conservative rights. Two of these decisions involved unconstitutional takings of property, and one involved the rules for federal preemption of state laws, leaving only one conservative offensive victory in a case about a social issue: *Richmond* v. *J.A. Croson Co.*, invalidating the city's racial set-

[†]Somewhat to my surprise, there were very few decisions that were difficult to characterize as liberal, conservative, or neither. I treated separation of powers issues as nonpartisan, notwithstanding any short-term political implications. In making my characterizations, I considered not only the issue in the case but how the most liberal and most conservative Justices voted. If the strongly conservative Justices were divided over the case, I did not count it as either "liberal" or "conservative." Although another scholar might come up with slightly different figures, I do not believe that any such difference would significantly alter the ratio of offensive to defensive victories.

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Major Constitutional Victories in the Rehnquist Court

		CO	CD	LO	LD	N	Total
1	Criminal Law and Procedure	0	17	5	0	2	24
2.	Establishment of Religion	0	2	2	0	0	4
3.	Freedom of Speech	0	9	4	1	1	15
4.	Search and Seizure	0	9	0	0	0	9
5.	Takings	2	0	0	0	0	2
6.	Equal Protection	1	2	2	0	0	5
7.	Federalism	1	0	0	1	0	2
8.	Free Exercise	0	2	0	0	0	2
9.	Due Process	0	3	0	1	2	6
10.	Eighth Amendment	0	2	0	1	0	3
11.	Eleventh Amendment	0	0	0	0	1	1
12.	Separation of Powers	0	0	0	0	3	3
13.	Right to Privacy	0	2	1	0	0	3
	TOTALS	4	48	14	4	9	79

Total Conservative Victories: 52
Offensive = 8 percent
Defensive = 92 percent

Total Liberal Victories: 18
Offensive = 78 percent
Defensive = 22 percent

aside for municipal construction contracts. During the same period, liberals scored only eighteen victories, but fourteen of these (78 percent) were offensive—a decision invalidating the display of a crêche, for instance.

My point is not that defensive decisions are necessarily correct or harmless. They may be motivated by political ideology, may please political partisans, may cavalierly ignore or misinterpret precedents, may be badly reasoned, may have terrible consequences, and may deserve sharp criticism. By the same token, an offensive victory may be justified by legal and policy criteria. Nevertheless, the conservatives' defensive victories are not "conservative decisions" in the same sense in which *Lochner* v. *New York* (invalidating a minimum-wage law for bakers) was a conservative decision, or *Mapp* v. *Ohio* (reversing a conviction tainted

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by unconstitutionally seized evidence) was a liberal decision. They are, rather, decisions that leave the ultimate resolution of the policy issue in the hands of elected officials and their delegates. This is not always wise, but it is "conservative" only to the extent that the American people choose to make it so.

The people's freedom to override what I have called defensive decisions has normative implications. To the extent that one believes strongly in federalism and electorally accountable government, reduction of the Supreme Court's role is attractive. But I wish to stress a less arguable point: In the courtroom battles between liberal and conservative agendas, offensive victories are—all else being equal—far more potent than defensive victories. This difference is magnified by the fact that rights create expectations, and so offensive victories are harder to reverse than defensive victories.

Preserving precedent

As the latest abortion ruling reminds us, the Rehnquist Court is "liberal" in a third sense: The Court, though nibbling at the edges of liberal precedents, and indisposed to interpret them expansively, has refused to overrule any of the most famous and controversial constitutional decisions of the Warren and Burger Courts. There is certainly room for debate about whether this is a cause for celebration or regret, whether it somehow validates the liberal decisions, and so on. But there is no denying the durability of the most controversial liberal decisions, despite decades of conservative protests and an almost entirely Republican Court appointed largely in response to those protests. Does anyone expect that when liberals regain control of the Court, the most controversial decisions of the Rehnquist Court will be upheld by the liberal Justices in the name of *stare decisis* and the rule of law? If not, there is a liberal engine in constitutional law that keeps on running even when conservative feet have slammed on the brakes.

If we focus on the Justices' reluctance to overrule the landmark liberal decisions—*Mapp*, *Miranda*, school prayer, and *Roe*, for instance—we may suppose that fidelity to precedent is the major explanation for the Court's failure to adopt a militantly conservative stance. Conservatives, so the theory might go, believe in the rule of law. That commitment makes them hesitate to engage in

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the freewheeling creation of new rights, but it also makes some of them reluctant to overrule precedents. When the precedents are "liberal," this conservative predisposition produces results that are politically liberal—one of history's many little ironies.

This explanation is tidy, and partly valid, but not quite adequate. In the first place, no Justice takes the position that precedents are absolutely sacrosanct. Thus, while *stare decisis* may be a factor, conceivably an important one, it cannot be the whole explanation. We need some additional theory to explain why the "moderate" Justices chose to preserve particular precedents.

Roe and *Casey*

This is especially true of *Roe* v. *Wade*. Uniquely among the major Warren and Burger Court decisions, *Roe* has been criticized even by many prominent liberal scholars—including John Hart Ely, Archibald Cox, and Michael Perry—who defend all or nearly all the rest of the liberal activist heritage. Although several other liberal scholars have tried valiantly to rewrite Justice Blackmun's weak *Roe* opinion, I know of no one hostile to abortion rights who has been converted by their jurisprudential arguments. By common consent, *Roe* is the most difficult to defend of all the great liberal activist decisions.

The pivotal opinion in *Casey*, signed by Justices O'Connor, Kennedy, and Souter, contains language indicating that "some" of the three disapprove of abortion, at least as a matter of personal morality, but also other language justifying *Roe*. The most interesting portion of the opinion, however, is about *stare decisis*. In a nutshell, the Justices concluded that even if *Roe* was wrongly decided none of the justifications for overruling a constitutional precedent applies: the decision has not, for example, proved to be unworkable, or inconsistent with other lines of doctrine. By overruling *Roe* merely because newly appointed Justices regard it as a bad decision, the Court would disappoint women who have ordered their careers in reliance on the availability of abortion, and such a decision would create the impression that the Justices yielded to political pressure, and more generally that constitutional decisions are determined by politics, thus undermining the Court's legitimacy and the rule of law.

The moderates' reasoning raises many fascinating questions. Is their theory about women's "reliance" on *Roe* realistic? Would

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it make sense to overrule *Roe* on the theory that, contrary to the Court's expectations, *Roe* did not put the abortion issue to rest, something that can be done only by returning the problem to the states? Is it self-contradictory to announce that the reason for a decision is to dispel the notion that the Court is politically motivated? Why is it dangerous to create the impression of yielding to pro-life pressure, but harmless to create the impression of yielding to pro-choice pressure?

In my opinion no explanation of the moderates' refusal to overrule *Roe* is entirely logical except on the assumption that this trio of Justices, whatever qualms some or all of them have about judicial intervention in this area, regard abortion rights as basically sound legislative policy, and are therefore inclined to let jurisprudential bygones be bygones. Some of the majority upholding *Roe* evidently disapprove of abortion as a matter of personal morality; they may believe that abortion rights are simply a necessary evil. Some of them probably regret that the Court decided *Roe* as it did. But they probably do not regard abortion as murder, and they probably do not believe that this would be a better country if the states prohibited abortion in all or most circumstances. Otherwise, they would have voted to overrule *Roe*, notwithstanding the debatable and speculative arguments in favor of *stare decisis*.

If this conjecture is correct, then what we need, in order to understand the durability of *Roe* and other landmark liberal decisions, is an explanation of why these decisions, so often criticized by conservative thinkers, arouse more ambivalent feelings in some of the "conservative" Justices. To say that some of these Justices are gradualists, who dislike radical legal changes, is true, but only pushes the inquiry back to another stage: Why did Republican presidents, trying hard to please their right-to-life constituents, fail to appoint more zealous conservatives to the Court?

The culture of the Court

The most obvious and popular explanation is that the Senate, controlled by Democrats, has forced Republican presidents to appoint "moderates" instead of more reliably conservative nominees like Judge Bork. This theory is certainly a major part of the story, and it may be the best single explanation of why the Court

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refused to overrule *Roe* and issued a few other decisions that disturbed conservatives. But it does not explain why conservative presidents have such a hard time finding Supreme Court nominees who are indubitably distinguished, reliably conservative, and yet devoid of a "paper trail" that can be used to block their nominations in the Senate. Imagine the reverse situation: a Senate controlled by Republicans, and a Democratic president who wants to appoint a reliably liberal, pro-choice Justice. Such a president could draw nominees from an enormous pool of distinguished scholars and judges, many of whom have not spoken out specifically about abortion, and yet could confidently (though not certainly) be expected to support the liberal position on abortion and most other issues. Why do Republican presidents find the same task so excruciatingly difficult?

The most plausible explanation is sociological. On the whole, the liberal position on cultural issues tends to be the position of leading lawyers and other elites, while the conservative position is populist. As Republicans, Justices Kennedy, Souter, and O'Connor can be expected to subscribe to some tenets of cultural populism; but as graduates of elite law schools and pillars of the bar they can be expected to show occasional liberal tendencies. This class dimension of the cultural struggle helps to explain why Republican Supreme Court appointees so often disappoint movement conservatives: Since the conservative position on cultural issues is populist, the more "distinguished" a Republican lawyer's credentials, the greater the danger that he will be a less than wholly reliable conservative. If a Republican president tries to solve this problem by nominating a nonentity from the cultural heartland, he runs the risk that the Senate will reject the nominee as unqualified. If he instead looks for distinguished lawyers who are on record against *Roe*, the Senate will reject his nominee. The only solution is to take a chance on a distinguished nominee who is known to be at least fairly conservative, but whose views on overruling decisions like *Bakke* and *Roe* are uncertain.

Abortion is not the only example of this problem, but it is the most acute one. Although the right-to-life movement is a powerful bloc in electoral politics, it consists largely of evangelical Christians, and so is underrepresented in the highest echelons of law and politics. This weakness is even greater than it appears to be:

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The apparent representation of right-to-life sentiments in the leadership of the Republican Party is sometimes mere political expediency. According to one published estimate, about 75 percent of the Washington, D.C., Bush-Quayle staff is privately pro-choice. It should not be surprising, then, that even such conservative Justices as Burger, Kennedy, Souter, and O'Connor have contributed to the creation and preservation of abortion rights while serving as life-tenured Justices.

Class has become more decisive than religion in determining attitudes toward most social issues. Lawyers, who provide one of the most significant illustrations of this phenomenon, are sometimes considered to be members of the so-called new class, which tends to support liberal causes. As Nathan Glazer observed in a 1979 essay, "Lawyers and the New Class," this is an oversimplification. On economic issues, lawyers should not simply be lumped together with academics, journalists, and other members of the "knowledge industry" who tend to be antipathetic to business. Most lawyers are, after all, either small businessmen in their own right, or representatives of business interests, or both. On the other hand, lawyers have an occupational bias in favor of due process, in favor, that is, of creating rights that will require lawyers (and that lawyers tend to believe, in all sincerity, make for a better society). Not only that, Glazer notes, but the legal profession is stratified, with the apex more liberal than the base:

> At its peak—among elite law-school faculty, students in elite law schools, the Federal judiciary—the law is quite different from what a random sample of legal practitioners would show, and much closer to the "new class" in its orientation to government and business. Despite their small numbers, interventionist lawyers—the public interest lawyers, the government regulators—are not alone. The corporate body that represents the bar, as we have seen, will give them support, even if grudgingly. Distinguished law professors will mark out the path they should take, and justify it before they have entered upon it. Appellate judges will be influenced in various ways by elite law-school faculties.

In this passage Glazer focuses on lawyers' attitudes toward private markets and expansion of government regulations. In that context, as he acknowledges, the profession is ambivalent. But if we focus instead on the cultural and social attitudes of elite lawyers, it becomes much clearer that the top rank of the legal profession, while divided, is basically on the liberal side. All

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Justices, whatever their political views, belong to a legal culture that glorifies the traditional civil liberties of our Anglo-Saxon heritage, the same liberties that liberal activist Justices like Warren, Douglas, and Brennan invoked. For better and worse, we glorify fair trials, not deserved punishment; precious rights, not onerous duties; unpopular minorities, not close-knit communities. Even the more conservative Justices—Justice Kennedy, for instance—move in academic and bar circles that are more liberal on certain issues—such as school prayer, crime, affirmative action, and flag burning—than the average American. In short, the liberal positions on cultural-social issues, however much they may reflect concern for the least powerful segments of our society, are the positions of the most powerful elites in the media, academe, and the practicing bar.

The reputations of the Justices, the warmth of their welcome on their frequent visits to law schools, and their places in history, depend chiefly on the evaluations of their work by liberal journalists and scholars. Inevitably, those evaluations are strongly colored by the degree to which a Justice's votes correspond to the liberal constitutional agenda. One trusts that all this has little effect, even subconsciously, on the Justices' votes, but they would not be human if it did not occasionally affect some of them.

In addition to elites, the general public, too, sometimes supports the leading liberal precedents. Although the Warren and Burger Courts were on the whole more liberal than public opinion on most cultural issues, not all of the most famous precedents from those eras can be so characterized. The decisions in *Brown*, *Gideon*, and the reapportionment cases, though disruptive and controversial at the time, reflect broadly shared American values, as public policy if not as constitutional interpretation, and today not even movement conservatives urge the Court to overrule them.

The hands-off Constitution

On many cultural-social issues, it is difficult for the judiciary—even if so inclined—to offer positive assistance to conservatives. As constitutional historians have often stressed, the Bill of Rights was drafted to protect the individual from government interference, not to require the government to act affirmatively

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in the public interest. In the field of economic regulation, the "negative liberty" protected by the Bill of Rights is more helpful to property owners fighting against regulations than to liberals who want the Court to establish rights, such as a right to housing, that require positive government action. But in cultural-social battles the distinction between positive and negative liberty often cuts in favor of liberals. If it is difficult to read a right to shelter into the Fourteenth Amendment, it is at least equally difficult to discover a right to safe streets, or to textbooks that are fair to religion, or to stable, traditional families, in that provision.

The problem is not merely that the constitutional text inclines the Court toward laissez-faire. The judicial process is not well-equipped to require governments to adopt, fund, and enforce programs that the judges favor. In our system of government a court cannot be expected to order a state to repeal domestic partnership laws, or to devote more resources to fighting pornography or crime, or to impose more severe penalties for particular crimes. But the judges, if they wish, can easily take the liberal side of these issues—by reversing the criminal conviction of a pornographer, for example.

In the field of criminal law, we have a liberal Constitution even when we have a conservative Court, just as—from the standpoint of the homeless or unemployed—we have a conservative Constitution even when the Justices are liberal.

Judicial restraint

Another reason why conservative jurists have not created conservative rights is their commitment to a reduced role for the Court. Admittedly, there are some respects in which the Rehnquist Court may not be more "restrained" than its predecessors. Judicial restraint is a loose term, which can mean judicial nonintervention, or adherence to the language of the Constitution or the Framers' intentions, or fidelity to precedents, or voting against personal political convictions. Liberals often claim that the Rehnquist Court is unrestrained in one or more of these senses. To evaluate each of those charges would require volumes of analysis, especially if we tried to compare the Rehnquist Court with its predecessors. For our present purpose, it suffices to note that even if every liberal charge against the Rehnquist

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Court is entirely correct, even if it is a "political" and "lawless" Court, it is not a Court that has invented many conservative constitutional rights.

To be sure, one or two of the Court's decisions in "takings" cases have emitted faint (and ambiguous) signals that were interpreted in some quarters as portending a renaissance of conservative activism. But the just-compensation clause, though beloved by country lawyers seeking zoning variances, still affords hardly any protection to a business or landowner whose property has been severely and perhaps unfairly devalued by a regulation, so long as he can still make some remunerative use of the property. As constitutional rights go, the concept of regulatory takings is still moribund, even thought the Court is controlled by conservatives. In other areas, the Court has disappointed business litigants by refusing to invalidate excessive punitive-damage awards, rent-control laws, the federal RICO statute, and various state regulations of business.

Why then are liberal commentators so ungrateful for this type of restraint? Why do they describe the Rehnquist Court as reaction run amok? In part, the explanation is that constitutional arguments, on both sides, are characteristically hyperbolic. Another explanation is that liberals fail to perceive conservative judicial restraint, partly because in the cultural and social realm it may not exist and partly because in the economic realm it is so well settled as to be invisible. What does it mean, after all, for a conservative Justice to practice "judicial restraint"? What is the impulse that he or she must restrain? In the cultural and social cases that have come before the Court during the past fifty years or so, the non-interventionist position has usually coincided with the conservative political position. When the current Chief Justice votes, for example, to uphold the death penalty, a conservative may characterize this as commendable judicial restraint, meaning that the Court has left the issue in the hands of the political branches of government where it belongs. But a liberal will perceive the same vote as simply political conservatism, meaning that the Chief Justice voted in accordance with his reprehensible conservative convictions on the issue. If the decision is one that disappoints expectations created by earlier, liberal decisions, which the Chief Justice ignores, tries to distinguish, or votes to overrule, he will be perceived as a reactionary activist, not as a

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Justice who restrains his urge to intervene in the political process.

In the property-rights cases, where conservative judicial restraint is more authentic, liberals are ungrateful because—like most comfortable Americans—they care less about regulation of business than about the quasi-religious culture wars. Besides, liberals exhibit the universal human tendency to take one's own advantages for granted. If former Chief Justice Fred Vinson got no credit for failing to revive property rights, in a decade when the memory of the Nine Old Men was still vivid, we can hardly expect liberals to applaud William Rehnquist for the same passive achievement some forty years later.

The Court's enduring liberalism

On her deathbed, Gertrude Stein asked, "What is the answer?" She lay silent for a moment, and finally said, "But then, what is the question?" If the question is "Who wins most of the controversial cases in the Rehnquist Court?" the answer, obviously, is that the conservative side usually prevails. Compared to the Warren Court, the Rehnquist Court is a disaster for liberals.

But if we ask whether the current Justices lean left or right, the answer is that on socio-cultural issues the Court's decisions have been either as liberal as, or more liberal than, the public's opinions, and more liberal than the opinions of most conservative intellectuals, albeit considerably less liberal than those of the Yale Law faculty or the editors of the *New York Times*. Concerning property rights, the current Court is nowhere near as conservative as a libertarian economist or the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*. What the Rehnquist Court has done is to reduce, without eliminating, the gap between the Court's socio-cultural doctrines and the convictions of the ordinary citizen.

If we ask, "Which side in the culture wars gains more advantages today from the fact that we have a Supreme Court?" the answer is that the liberal side does, although less so than twenty or thirty years ago. Liberal victories in constitutional litigation are usually offensive and absolute, while conservative victories are nearly always defensive and contingent, subject to reversal in the political arena. Although all decisions run the risk of being overruled by a future Court, the most celebrated liberal constitutional decisions have survived conservative attacks, an immu-

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nity that comparably controversial conservative decisions have never been accorded.

We have too readily accepted the notion that the Supreme Court passes through "liberal" and then "conservative" eras. Although these shorthand labels are partly valid, because they accurately describe important changes in the Court's personnel and decisions, they ignore important continuities. In analyzing those continuities, it would be a mistake to place too much emphasis on the Court's refusal to overrule *Roe*. Although the Court has not yet overruled any of the most famous liberal constitutional decisions, and in that sense *Roe*'s survival may seem in retrospect to be unsurprising, no 5-4 majority is inevitable. Yet even if the Court had overruled *Roe*, the record of the Rehnquist Court would still have contained a mixture of conservative and liberal elements. The Court is not creating many liberal constitutional rights, but neither is it creating many conservative rights. In the battle over divisive social issues, the Supreme Court has contracted its role. But that role, although diminished, still furnishes more potent—and more durable—assistance to liberals than to conservatives.

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The post-capitalist world

PETER F. DRUCKER

EVERY FEW hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp transformation. Within a few short decades, society—its world view, its basic values, its social and political structure, its arts, its key institutions—rearranges itself. Fifty years later there is a new world. And the people born then cannot even imagine the world in which their grandparents lived and into which their own parents were born. We are currently living through such a transformation.

One such transformation occurred in the thirteenth century, when the Western world suddenly, almost overnight, became centered on the new city. There was the emergence of the city guilds as the new dominant social class; the revival of long-distance trade; the appearance of the Gothic, that eminently urban new architecture; the new painting of the Sienese; the shift to Aristotle from theology as the foundation of new wisdom; the new urban universities replacing the monasteries in

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their rural isolation, as the centers of culture; the new urban religious orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, the carriers of religion, of learning, of spirituality; and within a few decades, the shift from Latin to the vernacular, with Dante creating a European literature.

Two hundred years later, the next transformation took place. It happened in the sixty years between Gutenberg's invention of printing with movable type and with it the printed book in 1455, and Luther's Protestant Reformation in 1517. These were the years of the blossoming of the Renaissance (peaking between 1470 and 1500 in Florence and Venice); of the rediscovery of Antiquity; of the discovery of America; of the first standing army (the Spanish Infantry) since the Roman Legions; of the reinvention of the study of anatomy and with it of scientific inquiry in general; and of the widespread adoption of Arabic numerals in the West, providing a new ease of computation. And again, no one living in 1520 could easily have imagined the world in which his grandparents had lived and into which his parents had been born.

The next transformation began in 1776—the year of the American Revolution, of Watt's perfected steam engine, and of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. It came to a conclusion forty years later, at Waterloo—forty years during which all modern "isms" were born. During these years capitalism, communism, and the Industrial Revolution emerged. These forty years produced, in effect, a new European civilization. Again, no one living in 1820 could easily imagine the world in which his grandparents had lived and into which his parents had been born. One had to read novels to learn about that world.

A new era

Our time, 200 years later, is again such a period of transformation. Only this time it is not confined to Western society and Western history. Indeed, one of the fundamental changes is that there is no longer a "Western" history or a "Western" civilization. There is only world history and world civilization—the creation, to be sure, of Western history and Western civilization. Whether this transformation began with the emergence of the first non-Western country, Japan, as a great economic power (that is, around 1960) or with the first computer (that is, with

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information becoming central) is debatable. My own candidate would be the American G.I. Bill of Rights after World War II, which gave every returning American soldier the money to attend a university—something that would have made absolutely no sense only thirty years earlier at the end of World War I. The G.I. Bill of Rights, and the enthusiastic response to it on the part of America's veterans, signaled the shift to the knowledge society. We are still in the middle of this transformation—indeed, if history is any guide, it will not be completed until 2010 or 2020. But already it has changed the political, economic, social, and moral landscape of the world. No one born in 1990 will easily imagine the world in which his grandparents (i.e., my generation) grew up, or the world into which his own parents were born.

The first successful attempt to understand the transformation that began in 1455 and turned the Middle Ages and Renaissance into the Modern World was not even attempted until fifty years later, with the *Commentaries* of Copernicus (written between 1510 and 1514), Machiavelli's *The Prince* (written in 1513), Michaelangelo's synthesis and transcendence of all Renaissance art in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (painted between 1510 and 1512), and the reestablishment of the Catholic Church in the Tridentine Council of the 1530s. Similarly, the next transformation—the one that occurred 200 years ago, ushered in by the American Revolution—was first understood and analyzed sixty years afterward, in Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, written between 1835 and 1840.

We are today far enough advanced into the new post-capitalist society—because the post-industrial society is really that—to review and revise the social, economic, and political history of the age of capitalism and of the nation-state. To foresee what the post-capitalist world itself will look like is, however, still very risky. What new questions will arise and where the big new issues will lie, we can, I believe, already discover with a high degree of probability. We can also, in many areas, describe what will not work. But "answers" are in most cases still hidden in the future. The one thing we can be sure of is that the world that will emerge from the present rearrangement of values, of beliefs, of social and economic structures, of political concepts and systems, of world views, will be different from anything anyone

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today imagines. But in some areas—and especially in society and its structure—basic shifts have already happened. That the new society will be both a non-socialist and a post-capitalist society is practically certain. And it is certain also that its primary resource will be knowledge and that, therefore, it will have to be a society of organizations. In politics we have already shifted from the 400 years of the sovereign nation-state to a pluralism in which the nation-state will be one rather than the unit of political integration. It will be a component—although still a key component—in what I call the "post-capitalist polity," a system in which transnational, regional, nation-state and local, indeed tribal, structures compete and coexist.

These things have already occurred. They can therefore be described.

Only twenty years ago "everybody" knew that a post-capitalist society would be of a Marxist complexion. Now we all know that a socialist society is the one thing the next society is not going to be. But most of us also know—or at least sense—that the developed countries are moving away from anything that could be called "capitalism." The market will surely remain the effective integrator of economic activity. But as a society the developed countries have also already moved into post-capitalism with new "classes" and a new central "resource."

Capitalist society, as it peaked in the nineteenth century, was dominated by two social classes: the "capitalists," who owned and controlled the means of production, and the "workers." The "workers" eventually became the "affluent" middle class as a result of what has been called the "productivity revolution"—the revolution that began at the very time of Marx's death in 1883, and reached its climax in every developed country shortly after World War II. Around 1950, the industrial worker—no longer a "proletarian" but still "labor"—seemed to dominate politics and society in every developed country. But then, with the onset of the "management revolution," blue-collar workers in manufacturing industry rapidly began to decline both in numbers and even more in power and status. By the year 2000 there will be no developed country in which traditional workers making and moving goods account for more than one-sixth or one-eighth of the work force.

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The capitalist probably reached his peak even earlier—by the turn of the century, and surely no later than World War I. At least no one since has been able to match in power and visibility the likes of Morgan, Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford in the United States; of Siemens, Thyssen, Rathenau, and Krupp in Germany; of Mond, Cunard, Lever, Vickers, and Armstrong in England; of de Wendel and Schneider in France; or of the families that owned the great *zaibatsu* of Japan—Mitsubishi, Mitsui, and Sumitomo. By the time of World War II they had all been replaced by "professional managers." There are still a great many very rich people around, of course, and they are still prominent in the newspapers' society pages. But they have become "celebrities." Economically they have almost ceased to matter. The head of a corporation who retires with $50 million, or even double that amount, is an economic non-entity.

Today it is the well-established pension funds that increasingly control the supply and allocation of money in developed countries. In the U.S. in 1991 these funds owned half the capital of the country's largest businesses and held almost as much of these companies' fixed debts. The beneficiary owners of the pension funds are, of course, the nation's employees. If "socialism" is defined as ownership of the means of production by the employees, then the U.S. has become the most "socialist" country around—while still being the most "capitalist" one as well. And the pension funds are run by a new breed of "capitalists"—the faceless and anonymous employees who run the pension funds as investment analysts and portfolio managers.

But equally important: The real and controlling "resource" and the absolutely decisive "factor of production" today is neither capital, nor land, nor labor. It is knowledge. And instead of "capitalists" and "proletarians," the relevant "classes" of the post-capitalist society are "knowledge workers" and "service workers."

The shift to the knowledge society

The move to the post-capitalist society began shortly after World War II. But only with the collapse of Marxism as an ideology and of communism as a system did it become clear that we have already moved into a new and different society.

The moral, political, and economic bankruptcy of Marxism, and the collapse of the communist regimes, were not "The End

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of History." Even the staunchest believers in the free market surely hesitate to trumpet its triumph as the Second Coming. But 1989 and 1990 did indeed signify the end of one kind of history. They brought to a close 250 years that were dominated by a secular religion—what I have called "belief in salvation by society." Its first prophet was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Marxist utopia was its ultimate distillation and apotheosis.

But the same forces that destroyed Marxism as an ideology and communism as a social system are also rapidly making capitalism as a social order obsolescent. For 250 years, from the second half of the eighteenth century on, capitalism was the dominant social ideology. Both are rapidly being superseded by a new and very different society and way of thinking about the world.

Whatever this new society will be, it will not be a socialist one. It surely—to say it again—will use the free market as the one proven mechanism of economic integration. It surely will not be an "anti-capitalist society." It will not even be a "non-capitalist society"; the institutions of capitalism will survive, though some (e.g., banks) may play quite different roles. But the new society—and it is already here—is a "post-capitalist" society. Its center of gravity, its structure, its social and economic dynamics, its social classes, and its social problems are different from those that characterized the last 250 years, dominated them, informed them, and defined the issues around which political parties, social groups, social value systems, and personal and political commitments crystallized.

The basic economic resource is knowledge. The wealth-creating activities will be neither the allocation of capital to productive uses nor "labor"—the two poles of nineteenth- and twentieth-century economic theories whether classical, Marxist, Keynesian, or neo-classical. They will center around "productivity" and "innovation," both applications of knowledge to work. The representative social groups of the knowledge society will be neither the "capitalist" nor the "worker," the two groups which characterized society since the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago. The ruling group will be knowledge workers, knowledge executives, knowledge professionals, and knowledge entrepreneurs who have the insight to allocate knowledge to productive use, the way the "capitalists" knew how to allocate capital to productive use.

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Practically all of them will be employed, either originally or eventually, in organizations. Yet unlike traditional employees, these knowledge workers own their knowledge, the new "means of production," and can take it with them wherever they go. The economic challenge of the post-capitalist society will therefore be the productivity of knowledge work and the knowledge worker.

But there will also be a second representative group—I call them "service workers"—who will lack the necessary education to be knowledge workers. And in every country, even the most highly advanced ones, they will constitute a majority. The social challenge of the post-capitalist society will thus be to ensure the dignity of service work and the service worker.

The post-capitalist society will also be divided by a new dichotomy of values and of aesthetic perceptions. It will not be the "Two Cultures"—the humanist, literary culture and the scientific culture of which the English novelist, scientist, and government administrator C.P. Snow wrote—though that split is real enough. It will be a dichotomy between "literati" and "managers," the former being concerned with words and ideas, the latter with people and work. To transcend this dichotomy in a new synthesis will be a central philosophical and educational challenge for the post-capitalist society.

Outflanking the nation-state?

The late 1980s and early 1990s also marked the end of another era, another "kind of history." If the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was the climactic event that symbolized the fall of Marxism and communism, the formation of a transnational coalition opposing Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was the climactic event that marked the end of the 400 years of history in which the sovereign nation-state was the main—and often the only—actor on the political stage. Future historians will surely rank January 1991 among the "big dates." There is no precedent for such transnational action, no earlier occasion where nations, without a single dissenter of consequence (and almost without dissent altogether), put the common interest of the world community in putting down terrorism ahead of their own national sentiments and, in many cases, ahead even of their own national interests. There is no precedent for the all-but-universal realization that terrorism is not a matter of "politics" to be left to individual

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national governments, but rather a threat that requires non-national, transnational action.

In the 400 years since the French lawyer-politician Jean Bodin invented it (in his 1576 book *Six Livres de la Republique*), the nation-state had become the sole organ of political power, internally and externally. And since the French Revolution it had also become the carrier of the secular religion, the belief in "salvation by society." Totalitarianism—communist as well as Nazi—was the ultimate distillation and apotheosis of the doctrine of the sovereign nation-state as the one and only organ of power.

Political theory and constitutional law still know only the sovereign state. And in the last one hundred years it has steadily become more powerful and more dominant. It has mutated into the "mega-state." It is also the one political structure we so far understand, are familiar with, and know how to build out of prefabricated and standardized parts—an executive, a legislature, courts, a diplomatic service, a national army, and so on. Every one of the 200-odd new countries that have been carved out of the former colonial empires has been set up as a sovereign nation-state. And this is what every one of the various parts of the last of the colonial empires, the Soviet empire, aspires to become.

Yet since the end of World War II the sovereign nation-state has steadily been losing its position as the one organ of power. It is fast becoming instead one among many such organs. Internally, developed countries are fast becoming pluralist societies of organizations. Externally, some governmental functions are becoming transnational, others regional (i.e., the European Economic Community), others are being tribalized.

The nation-state is not going to "wither away." It may remain the most powerful political organ around for a long time to come. But it will no longer be the indispensable one, and will increasingly share power with other organs, other institutions, other policymakers. We are moving fast toward the "post-capitalist" polity. And the division of power, the division of tasks, the division of responsibilities and accountabilities between the various levels of this post-capitalist polity are still to be defined: What is to remain the domain of the nation-state? What is to be carried out within the state by autonomous institutions? What is to be "supernational"? What is to be "transnational"? What is to be

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"separate and local"? Resolving these questions will be the central political agenda for decades to come. In its specifics, the outcome is quite unpredictable. But whatever it will be, the political order fifty years hence will look different from the political order of the last centuries, when the actors differed in size, wealth, constitutional arrangements, and political creed but were uniform as nation-states, each sovereign within its territory, and each defined by its territory.

The last of what might be called the "pre-modern" philosophers, Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716), spent much of his life in a futile attempt to restore the unity of Christendom. His motivation was not the fear of religious wars between Catholics and Protestants or between Protestant sects—that danger was already past when Leibnitz was born. But he feared that without a common belief in a supernatural God, secular religions would emerge. And a secular religion, he was convinced, would—almost by definition—have to be a tyranny and suppress the freedom of the individual.

A century later Jean-Jacques Rousseau proved Leibnitz right by asserting that society could and should control the individual human being. It could and should create a "New Adam." It could and should create universal human perfection. But it also could and should subordinate the individual to the impersonal, super-personal "general will" (*volonté générale*)—what Marxists later came to call the "objective laws of history." Since then salvation by society has been the dominant creed of Western Man. And however much it pretends to be "anti-religious," it is a religious belief. The means are, of course, non-spiritual: banning liquor; killing all Jews; universal psychotherapy; abolition of private property. The goal, however, is religious: to establish the Kingdom of God on earth by creating the "New Man."

And for more than one hundred years the most powerful, the most pervasive and near-universal of these secular creeds, with their promise of salvation through society, was, of course, Marxism. Indeed it was the religious promise of Marxism—far more than its convoluted ideology and its increasingly unrealistic economic theory—that constituted its tremendous appeal, especially to intellectuals.

Communism collapsed as a system. It collapsed economically. Its material promises proved hollow. Instead of creating wealth

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it created misery. Instead of creating economic equality it created a nomenklatura of functionaries enjoying greater economic privileges than the world had ever seen. But as a creed, Marxism collapsed because it did not create the "New Man." Instead it brought out and strengthened all the worst in the "Old Adam": corruption, greed, and lust for power; envy and mutual distrust; petty tyranny and secretiveness; lying, stealing, and denunciation; and, above all, cynicism. Communism, the system, had its heroes. But Marxism, the creed, never had any saints.

The human being may well be beyond redemption. The Latin poet may have been right: Basic human nature always returns through the back door no matter how many times the pitchfork tosses it out the front door. Maybe the cynics are right who assert that there is no virtue, no goodness, no selflessness, only self-interest and hypocrisy (though there are enough witnesses to the contrary, as I remind myself in my darkest hours).

But surely the collapse of Marxism as a creed signifies the end of the belief in salvation by society. What will emerge we cannot know—we can only hope and pray. Perhaps nothing beyond stoic resignation? Perhaps a rebirth of traditional religion addressing itself to the needs and challenges of the person in the knowledge society? The explosive growth of what I call "pastoral" Christian churches in America—Protestant, Catholic, non-denominational—might be a portent. But so might be the resurgence of fundamentalist Islam. For the young people in the Moslem countries who now so fervently embrace Islamic fundamentalism would, forty years ago, have been equally zealous Marxists. Or will there be new religions? In any event, redemption, self-renewal, spiritual growth, conversion, goodness, and virtue—the "New Man," to use the traditional term—will be seen as existential, i.e., as applying to a person with an inner nature and commitment and experience, rather than as raw material for a social goal and political ideology. In that sense, too, we are seeing the end of one kind of history.

What about the Third World?

The Third World houses two-thirds of the world's population; and by the time the present period of transition comes to an end—around 2015 or 2020—the Third World will house three-quarters of the world's population. I consider it highly probable

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that within the next decade or two there will be new and startling "economic miracles" in which poor, backward countries transform themselves virtually overnight into highly developed, fast-growing economic powers. It is even possible that there will be far more such transformations than there have been in the last forty years, that is, since we first began to talk about "economic development." There is the vast potential of the coastal, urbanized areas of Mainland China—from Tsienstin in the North to Canton in the South. All the economic elements for rapid growth are present there: a huge domestic market; a highly educated population with tremendous respect for learning; an old entrepreneurial tradition; close ties to the "overseas Chinese" in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, with access to their capital, trading networks, and knowledge workers. All this might be released in an explosion of entrepreneurial growth if only Beijing's political and economic tyranny could be removed, and removed peacefully. There is India, with enormous untapped potential. There is Latin America, and especially Latin America's larger countries, which offer an adequate domestic market—Mexico may already be in the "takeoff" stage. Brazil might surprise everybody by the speed of its turnaround once it has mustered the political courage to follow Mexico's recent example and abandon the suicidal policies into which it plunged itself fifteen years ago. And no one could possibly foretell what surprises the former communist countries of Eastern Europe might produce.

But the developed countries also have a tremendous stake in the Third World. Unless there is rapid development there—both economic and social—the developed countries will be inundated by Third-World immigrants, far beyond their economic, social, or cultural capacity to absorb, assimilate, and integrate. But the forces that are creating a post-capitalist society and a post-capitalist polity originate in the developed world; indeed, they are the product and result of its development. The answers to the challenges of a post-capitalist society and a post-capitalist polity will not be found in the Third World. If anything has been totally disproven it is the promises of the Third World leaders of the 1950s and 1960s—Nehru in India, Mao in China, Castro in Cuba, Tito in Yugoslavia, the apostles of Negritude in Africa and such neo-Marxists as Che Guevara—that the Third World would find new and different answers. The Third World has not delivered on the promises made in its name. The challenges, oppor-

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tunities, and problems of post-capitalist society and the post-capitalist polity can only be dealt with where they originated. And that is in the developed world.

Society, polity, knowledge

I am often asked whether I am an optimist or a pessimist. For any survivor of this century to be an optimist would be fatuous. And we do know that we are nowhere near the end of the turbulence, the transformations, the sudden upsets that have made this century one of the meanest, cruelest, bloodiest in human history. Anyone who deludes himself that we are anywhere near the "End of History" is in for very unpleasant surprises—the kind of surprises that afflicted President Bush when he first bet on the survival of the Russian Empire under Mr. Gorbachev, and then on the success of Mr. Yeltsin's "Commonwealth of Independent States."

But surely this is a time to make the future. Nothing "post" is permanent or even long-lived. Ours is a transition period. And what the future society will look like, let alone whether it will indeed be the "knowledge society" some of us dare to hope for, depends on how the developed countries—their intellectual leaders, their business leaders, their political leaders, but above all, each of us in his own life and sphere—respond to the challenges of this transition period, the post-capitalist period.

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Redefining equality: The liberalism of Mickey Kaus

JAMES Q. WILSON

FOR SOME YEARS, political insiders have spoken of "neoliberalism," but without much clarity as to what that label might stand for. To its critics, it has been nothing more than the vague "new ideas" of Gary Hart's abortive presidential campaign supplemented by the views of Charles Peters and some of his colleagues at the *Washington Monthly*. To its proponents, it has been a set of principles that might recapture for the Democratic Party its faltering hold on the American middle class by assuring these voters that Democrats share their fears and hopes. Among those proponents are many key advisors to Bill Clinton, including people from the Democratic Leadership Council and the Progressive Policy Institute.

Neoliberals are like neoconservatives in constituting an intellectual fragment that can wield some influence only by advancing ideas when a window of opportunity has briefly opened, usually when people out of power need new arguments to get into power. Neoconservatism came of age politically when Lyndon Johnson's presidency in its early years had seemingly killed Republican hopes for winning the White House and vastly expanded the policy ambitions of the federal government. Neoliberalism may have come of age when Republican control of the presidency seemed invincible and the Democratic leadership of Congress was in public disrepute.

But what ideas? That is difficult to say, since the prefix "neo," when attached to an ideological disposition, seems to imply an aversion to manifestoes or platforms. In the last chapter of his 1991 book, misleadingly entitled *Why Americans Hate Politics*, E.J. Dionne sketched out some ideas for a new kind of liberalism that would begin with a commitment to rewarding the work performed by the American middle class. There have been some other beginnings. Two new journals, the *Responsive Community*

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and the *American Prospect*, contain essays arguing about the degree to which rights need to be balanced by responsibilities. But the boldest and, among liberals, the most controversial statement, is *The End of Equality*[1] by Mickey Kaus.

KAUS, WHO describes his background as that of a "leftish lawyer" who worked briefly in the Carter administration before becoming a political writer, has produced a lively and provocative account of what he calls the new Civic Liberalism, to distinguish it from what he thinks is the old-fashioned and politically moribund Money Liberalism. Civic Liberalism rests on four key propositions that, though defended with more spirit than rigor, constitute a fundamental challenge to traditional New Deal/Great Society liberalism.

First, the common good is as important as (and ultimately, perhaps, more important than) individual rights. Any political ideology must answer the question, what do we want society to look like? Individuals ought to have rights, but rights in what framework of common understandings and common undertakings? It is not enough to be in favor of fairness, Kaus implies, because we can only be fair if we first understand in what respect people are or are not equal, nor can one accept equality of opportunity unless one specifies what kind of society will be enjoyed by those who take advantage of the opportunities. In philosophical terms (which Kaus doesn't use), he is arguing for the priority of the good over personal rights.

Second, individual differences exist and are to a large extent immutable. Kaus may be the first neoliberal to take seriously the argument of Harvard professor Richard J. Herrnstein that, since people differ in their (largely genetic) intelligence and society tends to reward the most intelligent, hierarchy (that is, a ranking of people by pay and power) is inevitable, and it will reproduce itself no matter how open the opportunities for new entrants. He calls it the "Herrnstein Nightmare," but that label, plus a few perfunctory and shallow criticisms, does not hide the fact that Kaus thinks the "nightmare" is close to reality. It is not even important that you believe it is IQ that is the decisive factor (though were Kaus to canvas the technical literature, he would discover that it almost surely is); it is only important, he argues, that there are some factors relevant to individual attainment—verbal facility, athletic ability, a nice smile, or whatever—that are to some significant degree inherited. Immutable human

[1]Basic Books. 288 pp. $25.00.

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differences limit dramatically the extent to which the distribution of status or power in society can be changed by changing the income distribution.

Third, trying to change the income distribution is not only self-defeating, it is also perverse, short-sighted, and indefensible. It is perverse in that differences in money income are necessary to reward activity. It is no rejoinder to point to a few horror stories of immense salaries or windfall profits as an argument for taking from the rich, because these stories are headline-grabbing exceptions to a rather smooth curve of people from the least to the most well-off with the well-off constituting a large and growing fraction of all people. Emphasizing money redistribution is short-sighted because it neglects the great changes in that distribution that have occurred as a result of economic growth. For example, economic growth between 1947 and 1973 had a vastly greater effect on the shape of the income curve—making it flatter by pushing more people above the mean—than did all of the policy interventions, both those of Carter and of Reagan, between 1973 and 1984. And it is indefensible to the extent that no one explains why a less unequal distribution would make society better off. It cannot be that one wants a flatter curve to improve the lot of the worst off, because their lot can be improved without altering the curve at all. If Kaus had studied Adam Smith closely, he would have also said that the lot of the worst off can only be improved by economic growth, which will have the effect of making the rich even richer. But he grasps the idea, as is evident by his argument that what we really object to about a country where the rich eat quail and the poor eat garbage is that the poor eat garbage. Do we care what the rich eat if the poor can eat Bob's Big Boy hamburgers or take-out pizza?

Fourth, society cannot be indifferent to the character of its citizens. Despite the efforts of some to discourage the use of the word "underclass," it is nonsense to pretend that such a group does not exist or is not a threat. The reason why it is called an underclass and why we worry about it is that its members have a bad character: They mug, do drugs, desert children, and scorn education. The causes of that bad character are complex and poorly understood, and neither Kaus nor anyone else thinks it can be changed simply by preaching at the underclass. But fiddling around with the level of welfare benefits is not likely to change it, either, and confining our response to welfare programs will enrage and alienate the great majority of honest, working people for whom "welfare" is a term of opprobrium.

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NOW, THESE four propositions could easily be endorsed by most conservatives, to say nothing of the great majority of the American people. In what sense can these principles be the basis for something called liberalism?

Kaus's fellow liberals have asked that very question, and in no uncertain terms. Robert Kuttner, writing in the *New Republic*, suggests that Kaus may have become a "convert to conservative fantasies of market meritocracy or unfounded genetic theories of intelligence."[2] Robert Scheer, writing in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, displays an impressive command of old-left venom. He describes the book as a self-indulgent rant of a kind one expects to find in an erotic novel and calls Kaus's proposals "harebrained" and "bizarre."

Well. What is liberal about the book, and what is this "bizarre" scheme that Kaus has concocted? Kaus, in company with most liberals, wants greater equality, but he defines equality in social rather than monetary terms. He is not entirely clear about what he means by social equality or inequality (these key concepts do not even appear in the index), but he seems to mean by social equality a condition in which everyone has equal pride as a citizen. This condition requires that minimum survival needs are met (nobody starves or is homeless) and that no arbitrary barriers to personal achievement exist, but beyond this that "nobody has to hang their [*sic*] heads or fawn or toady to anybody else." Kaus uses a quotation from George Orwell to make his point. What Orwell liked about revolutionary Spain was that waiters "looked you in the face and treated you as an equal."

If Orwell liked revolutionary Spain, he would have loved the United States of America. I can't recall ever being in a restaurant here in which the waiter was servile; it is hard enough finding one in which he refrains from affirming his social equality by saying, "Hi, I'm Ken and I'll be your waiter tonight." I have rarely succeeded in placing an order by telephone with the clerk at a catalog store without being called "James." (I'm often tempted to reply, "Please feel free to call me Mr. Wilson.") If Kaus thinks Americans lack equal pride in being a citizen, he not only has not read the relevant poll data, he has not attended a football game or watched the Olympics on television. If there are many Americans who feel they must toady to others, I have

[2] I must add that Kuttner here displays an ignorance of the evidence on the heritability of intelligence that is truly remarkable. I wonder if he thinks that he is as smart as he is—and he is very smart, indeed—simply because his parents sent him to the best schools.

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never met them. I can certainly attest to the fact that students, except for a few striving for better grades, don't toady to Harvard or UCLA professors. Having traveled throughout the world, I cannot recall a country in which being thought "stuck up" was a greater sin than it is in America.

WHAT DOES Kaus really mean by the problem of social inequality? I think it is that, in his view, Americans of different classes and strata no longer rub shoulders with one another as much as they once did. He calls this the "decline of the public sphere." By the public sphere he means the schools, stores, saloons, neighborhoods, and restaurants in which people come together. He also means the military since the ending of the draft.

He presents very little evidence that we rub shoulders less democratically than once was the case. There is some evidence, of course. Middle-class blacks have moved out of inner-city ghettos, and so the ghetto has become, as William Julius Wilson has made clear, a behavioral sink in which the truly disadvantaged are stuck without the leadership, role models, and purchasing power of their departed brethren. Prosperity has enabled millions of Americans to move to the suburbs or live in guarded urban buildings. As mass transit has declined in popularity, most of us no longer rub shoulders with each other on subway cars or buses but instead listen to our radios while driving alone in air-conditioned cars. As more and more of us buy VCRs or hook up to cable-TV companies, fewer and fewer of us go out to the movies. Even so, a vast amount of shoulder-rubbing continues, as is evident to anyone who spends much time at the beach, baseball park, or Disneyland and its numerous clones.

Even if there is slightly less shoulder-rubbing, it is far from clear in what sense, if any, these changes have increased the sense of social inequality. It is not obvious that sitting on a bus or subway car is a democratizing experience. I have spent many years riding the Boston subways and driving the Los Angeles freeways, and I can assure Kaus that doing the former was far more likely to induce in me feelings of social differentiation than the latter. Going to a movie theater makes us rub shoulders, but it also makes us acutely aware of the unpleasant tendency of our fellow citizens to talk, munch popcorn, and shuffle about during the entertainment. If I watch the same movie at home on my VCR, I can easily indulge the fantasy that everybody else, not being in the same room with me at the time, is a pretty nice person. And suburbs are not the homogeneous, single-class en-

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claves that their critics suppose. Belmont, Massachusetts, where I lived for a quarter of a century and where my children were educated in public schools, was a remarkably diverse place, more diverse, certainly, than such inner-city ethnic enclaves as the North End, South Boston, or Roxbury.

IN SHORT, it is very hard, after reading Kaus's brief and breezy paragraphs on the subject of the public sphere, to figure out what ills we are supposed to suffer from. Except for one: the declining role of military service in our public life. The draft did, indeed, bring different people together into very close quarters. A wartime movie that depicted a group of soldiers or sailors as consisting of Italian plumbers, Iowa farm boys, Ivy League graduates, and black athletes was not simply Hollywood typecasting; it describes the men I knew on the U.S.S. *Tarawa* pretty well. Compulsory military service had a great effect on all of us who were exposed to it, but it is not clear that it was exactly the effect Kaus has in mind when he writes of social equality. In fact, it is a bit hard to think of the military in egalitarian terms at all. If anyone wants to see hierarchy, toadying, servility, and class resentment at work, I suggest spending a few weeks on a naval base.

But the military does have one effect that almost everyone who has passed through it will confirm: It tests your sense of duty, your ability to withstand privation, and your capacity to lead others. It reveals your character as surely as does playing poker or getting married; for some, it improves that character. At a minimum, it gives you three or four years during a crucial stage in your life when you have a chance to grow up without doing too much damage to other people.

It is important that we be clear about what arduous service really means, because the core of Kaus's policy recommendations turns on this. If you strip away his somewhat fanciful complaints about the decline of network television broadcasting (Imagine! We would all be more egalitarian if we had to watch Milton Berle!), his vague endorsement of more serious public holidays, his ill-considered support of publicly financed political campaigns, and his curious reason for favoring universal health insurance (it makes us all spend time in the same waiting rooms), what is left has to do with compulsory service.

Compulsory service would take three forms: reviving the draft as a way of staffing the military, instituting national service for all young people, and requiring that welfare recipients work. These are serious and important ideas, not original to Kaus, of

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course, but linked together by him as various ways of implementing Civic Liberalism.

The key idea of Civic Liberalism is that it will be a remedy for social inequality. Policies to implement it, such as compulsory service, will not redistribute income; they will instead restrict the sphere in which income matters and enlarge the sphere in which it does not. In this, Kaus is following in the footsteps of Princeton philosopher Michael Walzer, whose book, *Spheres of Justice*, makes this argument. To this Kaus adds an additional argument: Compulsory work not only narrows the sphere of money (nobody can buy his way out of the draft or national service), it produces self-respect in those who work and mutual respect in those who see them earning dignity.

I think that Kaus is right about this. National service is a relatively popular idea, especially among middle-aged people who think today's kids have it too easy, and workfare to replace welfare is immensely popular. The antagonism that many Americans feel toward "welfare queens," real and imagined, exists in part because they are seen to be getting something for nothing and in part because they are viewed as being rewarded for immoral or irresponsible behavior. In *Beyond Entitlement* and *The New Politics of Poverty*, Lawrence Mead has made a powerful philosophical argument for why work and a general sense of reciprocal obligation are essential to the very meaning of citizenship and thus must be part of any welfare program that aims at restoring citizenship as well as reducing privation.

IT IS not clear whether compulsory service and workfare would produce the benefits Kaus and others claim for them; no argument, only experimentation, can answer that question. One wonders how either would solve the problem of alienated inner-city males who now flock to street gangs. One wonders whether requiring welfare mothers to work would alter the tendency of the fathers of those children to beget and abandon them. It is easy to raise these questions, but Kaus cannot be faulted for not providing conclusive answers. The answers will only come from an effort to test the ideas.

What is important is what Kaus's ideas say about the principles by which we should judge these answers. In this regard, it is important to note how the justification for the work component of Civic Liberalism is somewhat different from the reason for its other, "public sphere," parts. Work is desirable because people ought to work, because work reduces some of the social stigma associated with a certain kind of poverty, and because

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work improves the character of people who might otherwise engage in disorderly or criminal behavior. Kaus puts it quite bluntly: A work requirement is the surest way to reduce the size of the underclass. But this is not quite the same thing as saying that compulsory work reduces social inequality. Young people who spend a year cleaning river beds or clearing forest trails may be seen as doing good things, but they will not be seen as more equal than if they had spent the same year in school or traveling or working. Welfare recipients who work will be seen as doing their share and assuming their obligations, but it hard to imagine that this will lead to more people rubbing shoulders with them in cafés, schools, or the suburbs. Drafting soldiers and sailors may be good for those college-educated, upper-class young people who otherwise sneer at "the military mind" and it would certainly spread the risk of death more evenly in the event of a war, but it is not clear that after their two-year stint these veterans would be any less likely to get a law degree, move to the suburbs, drive to work in a BMW, watch movies on their VCR, and regard holidays as a chance to play golf.

I suspect that Kaus's liberal critics understand this and that this is why they attack him. They oppose work requirements and favor income redistribution. They regard his core proposal—enforcing the work ethic—as a profoundly antiliberal idea, and they are right. What I take to be Kaus's four key philosophical arguments are ones that no liberal, as that term is used today, can accept because they reject the priority of personal rights over the common good, disavow the assumption that human nature is transparent and mutable, deny the feasibility of using the power to tax to alter the reality of human differences, and accept without challenge the existence of bourgeois culture with its existing standards of propriety.

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On Hamilton and popular government

WALTER BERNS

ALEXANDER HAMILTON has never been a popular hero among his fellow citizens. When visiting the capital city, they mount the tour buses that take them to the Capitol, the White House, and the great memorials and monuments bearing the names of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and the fifty-odd thousand who died in Vietnam; few of them visit, or probably have ever heard of, Hamilton's statue in front of the Treasury building. The name of his great adversary, Thomas Jefferson, is attached not only to a Memorial but to a hotel, a "corner," an Institute for Justice, a condominium, and a host of other institutions, as well as to a Street, a Place, and (adjoining and running parallel to the Mall) a Drive; but Hamilton rates only an insurance company and (perhaps significantly) an Income Tax Service, and one lonely street. It's as if he were only a minor figure in this country's early history, rather like Elbridge Gerry or Roger Sherman.

Yet Hamilton's role as soldier of the Revolution was second only to that of Washington, on whose staff he served with great distinction. As one of his biographers points out, Hamilton crossed the Delaware, froze at Valley Forge, and stormed the last redoubt at Yorktown. And no one had more to do with the calling of the convention that, in 1787, wrote the Constitution, or with the fact that New York, by the narrow margin of 30-27, ratified it in 1788. Jefferson is rightly acclaimed as the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, and Madison as the father of the Constitution, but it was Hamilton, as Secretary of the Treasury and the most influential member of Washington's first cabinet, who set in motion the machinery of American government and, by so doing, can rightly claim the title of Founding Father. He restored the public credit, established the first Bank of the United States, laid the foundation for an efficient administration, and defined the executive powers, especially in their relation to those of the Congress. More than anyone else, it was

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he who launched the country on its way to becoming a great commercial republic.

BORN IN the West Indies—"the bastard brat of a Scots peddler," as John Adams once called him—Hamilton, unlike the Virginians Jefferson and Madison, "knew no native allegiance to any of the original states." (And, unlike Jefferson, he has no local cottage industry to commemorate his every act.) He was, as he said, a "Continentalist," a nationalist who devoted his years of public service to the building not of a nation of states but of an American nation. "I anticipate with you," he wrote in a letter to his friend Rufus King, "that this country will, erelong, assume an attitude correspondent with its great destinies—majestic, efficient, and operative of great things." And no one worked harder or more effectively in that cause. Yet strangely, as I have noted, he has never been a popular hero.

Or perhaps not strangely. For as Harvey Flaumenhaft makes clear in *The Effective Republic: Administration and Constitution in the Thought of Alexander Hamilton*,† which examines Hamilton's analysis of the problem of popular government and of its possible solution, Hamilton was not one to court public favor. Whatever the obscurity attending his birth or heritage, he was by nature an aristocrat, too proud to engage in any of the petty practices by which such favor is often won. Besides, the courting of public favor was contrary to his constitutional principles. Like Plutarch (in his chapter on Coriolanus) he believed that "the first destroyer of the liberties of a people is he who first gave them [or who first promised to give them] bounties and largesses." Better, in his judgment, to give them a representative government and an efficient administration. In a word, Hamilton was not one to curry favor by pronouncing encomiums to democracy.

Thus, while Jefferson was an early friend of the French Revolution, and continued to be so long after the evidence suggested that it had ceased to deserve his support, Hamilton expressed misgivings from the start. As he explained in a letter to the Marquis de Lafayette, "I rejoice in the efforts which you are making to establish [liberty] while I fear much for the final success of the attempts." Why, he asked, this forboding of ill, when all the appearances were so much in the French Revolution's favor? "I dread disagreements among those who are now united

†Duke University Press. 314 pp. $32.50.

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... about the nature of your constitution [and] I dread the vehement character of your people, whom I fear you may find it more easy to bring on, than to keep within proper bounds, after you have put them in motion." He concluded by saying he dreaded "the reveries of your philosophic politicians who appear in the moments to have great influence." But it is often the "philosophic" politicians who are memorialized—in Jefferson's case, rightly so. "All honor to Jefferson," wrote Lincoln in 1859,

> to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document, an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there, that today, and in all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling block to the very harbingers of re-appearing tyranny and oppression.

LIKE JEFFERSON, Hamilton was a champion of the rights of man—Flaumenhaft devotes a chapter to his writings on the subject—but unlike Jefferson he wrote no aphorism that future generations would be inclined to carve in the walls of a memorial. Rather than declaim the rights of the people, he devoted his efforts to devising the institutions by which they might be secured. And this, as he understood it, required not only checks on the government but checks on the people. In a word, it required a constitutionalizing of democracy. As he saw it, the task was not, as Woodrow Wilson was later to say, to make the world safe for democracy but, rather, to make democracy safe for the world.

Or at least for the United States. How this was to be done is explained by Flaumenhaft in a series of chapters that might have been entitled: Hamilton on representation, on the partition of power, on a unified, durable, and energetic executive, and on an independent judiciary. As Hamilton put it in *Federalist* 9, "the efficacy of [these institutional arrangements] is now well understood." In principle, yes, and for this he credits an improved "science of politics." But it remained for Hamilton to demonstrate their efficacy in practice. This he did, and for this, in addition to his other services on behalf of (to employ his term) "representative democracy," he ought to be remembered.

If, instead, he is largely remembered as a "monocrat," a monarchist at heart, that is largely (but, alas, not only) Jefferson's doing. Hamilton was a staunch friend of American republicanism, but there is no denying that he frequently praised the

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British constitution as one of the forms of government under which, in principle, the rights of man might be secured. So far as his reputation is concerned, it matters little that John Locke, "America's philosopher," said the same thing (*Treatises* II, sec. 132). So, by implication, did Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. (George III may have been "unfit to be the ruler of a free people," but only because his "character was marked by every act which may define a tyrant." What is this but to agree with Hamilton that princes are not necessarily tyrants and that, under some circumstances, a free people might rightly consent to be governed by them?) What matters is that Hamilton never persuaded Jefferson (and others) that he was not advocating monarchy for Americans. He was sometimes careless in what he said; even his friend Gouverneur Morris complained of it.

"General Hamilton," Morris said,

> was of that kind of man which may most safely be trusted; for he was more covetous of glory than of wealth or power. But he was of all men the most indiscreet. He knew that a limited monarchy, even if established, could not preserve itself in this country. He knew also, that it could not be established, because there is not the regular gradation of ranks among our citizens which is essential to that species of government, and he very well knew that no monarchy whatever could be established but by the mob.... But although General Hamilton knew these things, from the study of history, he never failed, on every occasion, to advocate the excellence of and avow his attachment to monarchical government. By this course he not only cut himself off from all chance of rising into office, but singularly promoted the views of his opponents, who, with the fondness for wealth and power which he had not, affected a love for the people which he had and they had not.

FLAUMENHAFT'S BOOK comes at a time when the American people are very much in need of Hamilton's instruction on the perils of popular government. How else to account for the popularity of Ross Perot, who, before he withdrew from the presidential race, apparently enjoyed the support of a plurality of the voters? Contemptuous of the "system," by which, whether he knew it or not, he meant the Constitution, he promised to do precisely what Hamilton warned against and worked so assiduously to prevent, namely, to bridge the distance between the people and their government. Instead of representative government, designed to "refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely

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to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations," Perot intended to institute an "electronic town hall." In this way, he would give the people what they want (or what they say they want) as soon as they want it, and Hamilton's popular government would come to mean government incapable of doing anything unpopular.

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Thriving families in the Swedish welfare state

KARIN SANDQVIST AND BENGT-ERIK ANDERSSON

ALTHOUGH some time has passed since the publication of David Popenoe's article blaming the Swedish welfare state for the decline of the Swedish family ["Family Decline in the Swedish Welfare State," Winter 1991], as Swedish demographers and family researchers we feel compelled to set the record straight. Quite frankly, in our view, he is wrong. Several of his factual claims are inaccurate and his interpretation of accurate facts is questionable at best.

To support his claim that the Swedish family is in decline, Popenoe cites low birth rates and a high incidence of one-person households, nonmarital cohabitation, and divorce. He observes that women work instead of remaining economically dependent on their husbands, that neither the elderly nor young adults are economically dependent on middle-aged breadwinners, and that parental control is further undermined by the prohibition against parents physically punishing their children. Preschool children are raised in day-care centers and rarely see their grandparents, according to Popenoe, who claims that such weakened family ties cause these children serious damage. On top of all of this, Popenoe charges, Swedish politicians never speak of strengthening the family.

But Popenoe misses the mark on all these counts. First, Sweden has a high birth rate compared to other European countries. In 1980, there was concern in Sweden over the falling birth rate (1.68), although the figure was average for Europe. Between 1982 and 1991, Sweden's total fertility rate rose sharply. Currently, at 2.13, it is Europe's third highest, exceeded only by those of Ireland and Iceland. If birth rates indicate family strength, Sweden shows no weakness here.

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Who is having these new babies? Not teenagers: Sweden has very low rates of teenage pregnancy despite permissive attitudes about teenage sex. Women in their late twenties have the highest birth rates, and birth rates differ little among social classes. Although college-educated women become mothers somewhat later than women who have completed only the compulsory nine years of education, they eventually have almost as many children—two or three on average. In this, Sweden diverges from the pattern of most countries, in which well-educated women have fewer children. According to national surveys, almost all young Swedish women want to become mothers, and most do so. Only 13 percent of Swedish women do not, and this percentage has been falling in recent decades, despite sex education, the pill, and free abortion.

In addition, 95 percent of babies are born into households in which their biological parents live together. Popenoe correctly reports that almost half of these couples do not have a marriage license, but few Swedes think the baby misses the piece of paper as long as the parents love and cherish one another. (If they *don't, a marriage license is a poor consolation.*) Neither families nor friends of an unwed couple with a child seem to worry about marriage licenses either, except when they belong to a religious group, in which case the couple probably has married. Fathers have been required to pay child support for their children born out of wedlock since 1917, so not even the basic financial security of the child is affected very much by a marriage license.

DIVORCES AND separations in Sweden occur at a rate roughly equivalent to the rates of Denmark, England, and Wales, but this rate has been remarkably stable since the late 1970s. In 1985, as many as 72 percent of all sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds were living with both of their biological parents. Some of the remaining 28 percent had experienced the death of one parent; others lived in a two-parent family with one stepparent.

Although Swedes are not concerned with marriage papers, they are concerned about divorce, and in their concern they often exaggerate its frequency. About eight years ago, a journalist reported that 40 percent of families in metropolitan areas were single-parent families. In reality, the source stated that 40 percent of single-parent families lived in metropolitan areas. But the false information was repeated in many publications and was simplified further to "40 percent of all children have a single parent," a claim now believed by many Swedes. Popenoe writes, "The chances that a Swedish child will live continuously to age

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eighteen with both biological parents are now only approximately one in two." We are curious about his source, as we know of no official publication that supports this assertion. (By way of comparison, incidentally, American family-policy experts Sheila Kamerman and Alfred Kahn have written that about 60 percent of U.S. children born in the 1980s are likely to live in "lone-mother families" at some point.)

Popenoe correctly states that Sweden has a high proportion of one-person households and that adults are generally economically independent of their parents and their children. These facts are related, of course. The majority of one-person households consists of senior citizens who are economically independent of their children, while low-cost social services enable the disabled to remain in their own homes. Moreover, small households are not new in Sweden; while it is true that modern Swedish children almost never have grandparents living with them, neither did their grandparents when they were young. Not even in agrarian times did the Swedes have many three-generation households. Instead, the usual arrangement for a retiring couple was to have their own cottage on a lot next to their children's home. This separate housekeeping was probably functional—it helped avoid daily family conflicts, since the younger wife had her own authority in matters of housekeeping instead of becoming subordinate to her mother-in-law. Popenoe seems to interpret the lack of three-generation households in Sweden as the result of recent welfare programs that make the generations economically independent. But the causal relationship may well be in the opposite direction: A cultural tradition of separate housekeeping and certain areas of female authority may have provided the structural basis for modern welfare programs. Basic economic independence is not the same as emotional distance or absence of practical and economic assistance. Contrary to Popenoe's assertion, there is no evidence of deteriorating family life or increasing emotional distance either between parents and young children or parents and adult children in Sweden. In most families, children meet their grandparents and other kin frequently, for a variety of everyday and special occasions.

POPENOE'S OTHER evidence of family decline consists of subjective complaints and results from qualitative studies that cannot be used for international comparisons. When Swedes complain that they have trouble organizing the daily family dinner, it is usually the extracurricular activities of schoolchildren, not the mother's employment, that prevents the family gather-

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ing. Likewise, reports about insecure children and teenage "angst" should be viewed in light of a generally high concern for the welfare of children and youth. The ban on corporal punishment of children is of course motivated by the same concern, combined with a widespread conviction that there are effective ways of bringing children up in a democratic spirit, without relying on violence and brute force.

Popenoe also claims that the authority of parents is undermined because social workers so easily take children away from their parents. In fact, the number of children taken into custody without parental consent (or the child's own consent if over age fifteen) ranged from 427 to 317 new cases per year in Sweden between 1982 and 1989. Compared to the total number of children under eighteen—about 1.8 million—this figure is low.

Family ties can be both oppressive and supportive. In patriarchal family systems, women and children are at particular risk of oppression. Underlying welfare programs and support of women's employment is the Swedish vision of the democratic, egalitarian family, tied together by love and affection, not by legalities and brutal economic need. To a large extent, the vision has become reality. Sweden is not heaven, but we would not put "family decline" at the top of a list of the country's problems. Perhaps the real reason that Swedish politicians rarely talk about strengthening the family is that most Swedes actually feel their families are thriving.

Karin Sandqvist and Bengt-Erik Andersson are family researchers at the Stockholm Institute of Education. This response was also signed by Gunilla Dahlberg, Jan Hoem, Britta Hoem, and Elisabeth Landgren-Möller.

Family decline: a rejoinder

DAVID POPENOE

NO ONE likes to have his work dismissed by the sweeping statement, "Quite frankly ... he is wrong." Even so, I welcome the opportunity to respond to the Swedish family researchers. My question is, wrong about what?

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In my *Public Interest* article and my earlier book, *Disturbing the Nest: Family Change and Decline in Modern Societies*, I stated that the family as an institution probably has grown weaker in Sweden than anywhere else in the world, certainly among advanced, Western nations. Individual family members in Sweden, I wrote,

> are the most autonomous and least bound by the group, and the group as a whole is least cohesive. The family carries out fewer of its traditional social functions; these have shifted to other institutions, especially the state and its agencies, which have correspondingly gained in power and authority. The family is smallest in size, least stable, and has the shortest life span; people are therefore family members for the smallest percentage of their lives.

Evidence may eventually disprove some of these points, but little was provided by Sandqvist and Andersson's response to my article. Indeed, I have encountered no evidence since the article was published that would cause me to change my conclusion.

What I have encountered is much consternation about my message from many Swedes and Swedish enthusiasts in other countries (ironically, I consider myself to be among the latter group). From my perspective, these critics have misunderstood my message and have adopted an unnecessarily defensive attitude toward my work.

Unfortunately, my research has sometimes been discounted because so many scholars and journalists have a strong vested interest in advocating and promoting Swedish welfare policies.† These policies often have been benevolent, and I, too, support many of them. For example, I have long advocated Swedish "family policies," such as parental leave and child allowances. I am not engaged, however, in a political or ideological campaign either for or against the Swedish welfare system. My interest is in developing a relatively unbiased account of what has happened to the family in modern societies. In this connection, the Swedish system must be seen for what it is—and for what it is not.

In their rush to discount my work, critics have completely overlooked one subtle, but important, point in my argument—not all of the consequences of a weakening or declining institution need be negative. I applaud the freedom of women in Sweden today, the nation's very low rates of teenage pregnancy

†Not all scholars in Sweden disagree with me. One recent report from the University of Stockholm concludes: "An examination of the trends in divorce confirms David Popenoe's views on the role of Swedish social policies on family behavior."

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and births, and (as I stated at the outset of my article) the remarkable degree to which Sweden has minimized the economic luck of the draw in determining the material quality of people's lives. Moreover, in my view, Sweden has done a remarkably good job of mitigating the negative social consequences of a weakening family institution. If I were a child of divorce, for example, I would rather be in Sweden than anywhere else because of the welfare benefits.

All that said, what actually has happened to the family in Sweden, why has it happened, and why should we be concerned?

IN MY OPINION, the most important negative social consequence of the weak-family dimensions mentioned above is family stability. As I stressed in the article, Sweden has one of the *highest family-dissolution rates in the Western world.* Family decline probably has been underway since human families first arose on this earth. Call it social evolution. Once the only social institution in existence, the family in advanced societies has been stripped down to a kind of end-of-the-line nuclear unit with limited functions. This evolutionary trend has brought substantial benefits in the realms of democracy, equality, and individual development; family members are no longer lifetime captives of the family into which they happen to be born or to marry. But today, this "isolated" nuclear family itself is splitting apart. Why is this a problem? Children need strong families and actively nurturing parents for their full development. As a group, children from "broken" families do significantly worse in life than children from intact, two-parent families.

A major recent study of psychiatric disturbances among adolescents, conducted by Duncan W. G. Timms under the auspices of the University of Stockholm's Project Metropolitan and based on the life experiences of *all* children born in Stockholm in 1953, supports this view. It concluded that "the experience of family disruption involving parental separation or divorce [but not death of a parent] has negative effects on later mental health whenever it occurs and regardless of the socioeconomic status of the household." Also, "boys born to unmarried women, living with a married and cohabiting couple in mid-childhood, but with a separated or divorced parent at the age of 17 years, have a particularly high rate of impairment in late adolescence."

The wonder is that Sweden, unlike most other advanced nations, has been so silent about this problem. This is one of the few studies ever done in Sweden on how family breakup affects children, and it was conducted by a British scholar. Although the

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Swedish government has studied virtually every other social problem, there has never been an official government *utredning*, or investigation, of this issue. Furthermore, the exhaustive Swedish "level of living" surveys have focused almost entirely on material measures of well-being and have avoided mental health and emotional dimensions, which are the nub of the problem. I find it very disturbing that these Swedish researchers could write that "there is no evidence of deteriorating family life" in Sweden. Are we to believe that Sweden is somehow exempt from family trends that are now universally recognized in other nations?

MEASURING THE extent of family dissolution by using the divorce rate is now of limited utility, especially when making comparisons with the United States. As I wrote in my article, in order to divorce one must first marry, and that is precisely what Swedes, in world-record percentages, have not been doing. The United States has the highest marriage rate in the West, and Sweden the lowest. Yet Swedes do continue to "couple," as the Swedish scholars rightly point out, and virtually all Swedish marriages are now preceded by nonmarital cohabitation (this is also the case in a number of other European nations).

What makes Sweden stand apart from other nations is the large number of cohabiting couples that *never* get married. (Bear in mind that "the Swedish tradition"—and that of other Scandinavian nations—was to get married after the children were born.) Despite a modest increase in the number of marriages in the past few years, the percentage of Swedes who live together outside of marriage, even when they have children, is now the highest in the world.

Why is this important? Because such non-married couples have a much higher rate of breakup than married couples. As stated in a 1990 Statistics Sweden report, "moving apart is more common among cohabiting couples than married ones. The cohabiting relationship thus represents much weaker family ties than does marriage." And, "Children with cohabiting parents face about a three times greater risk that their parents will separate than children with married parents."

Of course, when compared to the United States and all of its problems, Sweden can be cast in a very favorable light. But the real issue is how successful the Swedish welfare state has been on its own terms with regard to family problems. I said in my article that "the chances that a Swedish child will live continuously to age eighteen with both biological parents are now only approximately one in two." Swedish authorities had not provided

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such data, and I had to estimate to get roughly comparable data to that provided in the United States. Now a report by Statistics Sweden, using 1986 data, puts the rate at 40 percent rather than 50 percent. But given the upward spiral of the trend in other advanced nations (the rate has climbed alarmingly; for white children born in the United States from 1950 to 1954, it was only 19 percent), I will stand by my figure of around 50 percent for a child born in Sweden today. In the United States the figure may be slightly higher (estimates vary), but Sweden almost certainly ranks highest among the Western European nations in this regard. What kind of "benevolent welfare state" is it that dismisses such an important trend so readily?

The Swedish researchers begin their article with the issue of Swedish birth rates which, I am well aware, have risen slightly in the past few years. But birth rates also have risen about as much in the United States (where they are at roughly the same level as in Sweden), and also in many other European nations. Therefore, the recent increase cannot tell us very much. The rate at which Swedish women become mothers is also substantially the same as in the United States—if not a little lower. But this also tells us very little. It is the kind of family a child grows up in that is important.

American families report that they are "thriving" at about the same rate as Swedish families. I doubt very much, however, that these Swedish scholars would be willing to draw from this fact the same conclusion about family life in America that they are so eager to draw about Sweden. Rates of single-person and three-generation households are clearly not ideal measures of family decline (in the sense of "autonomy of individual family members"), and I do not disagree with the various reasons provided for these phenomena by the Swedish scholars. But there is no doubt that Sweden leads the world in these two measures.

MANY OTHER factors, in addition to "the welfare state," obviously contribute to the high family-dissolution rate and family decline occurring in modern societies. I mentioned some of these factors in my article and discuss them at length in my book. What possible common element could there be in nations as diverse as America and Sweden, which stand at opposite poles in terms of welfare benefits and government intervention, yet rival one another in family-dissolution rates? The most important single factor is probably economic security, which drives a radical "expressive" individualism that is destructive of the family as well as the other social groupings of civil society. Under condi-

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tions of relative economic security, individuals have more opportunity to break those social bonds on which they traditionally have had to rely. The United States is the world's leader in market-generated consumer affluence, and Sweden is the world's leader in state-generated economic security. Thus, it is no coincidence that the family structure of Beverly Hills is probably not much different from that of Lidingö, a wealthy suburb of Stockholm.

If economic security is the main cause, what is the solution? Surely, it is not to become poor again. But just as surely, economic and redistributional measures alone (as much as they are still needed in the United States) do not solve problems of the heart. Every child wants—and needs—two parents. This might even be called a child's "right," and it is as important a right in Sweden as in the United States. To promote it, a shift in cultural values and personal attitudes must take place, away from radical individualism and toward social obligation. In America, one senses a growing pressure to bring about such a family-strengthening shift—not necessarily back to the traditional nuclear family of full-time housewives, but toward a nuclear family consisting of a husband and a wife who stay together and take responsibility for their children and for each other. In Sweden, the remarkable silence on this issue is one of the most troubling commentaries on the Swedish welfare state.

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